

THE WOUNDED HEEL.





# THE WOUNDED HEEL

BY

EDWARD CLIFFORD

(Author of "A Blue Distance," "A Green Pasture,"  
"Father Damien and others.")

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## PREFACE.

The heel is wounded.

And therefore because the serpent has stung us, our life cannot yet be quite happy. Sometimes it is very sad—often it is chequered. The sad truth is that “sin lieth at the door,” and though the Conqueror has bruised its head with what will prove a death-blow, yet it still fights as a wounded wild animal fights. And in our conflict we are handicapped with the poison within.

It is a question whether there are more groans or smiles in the world, and more good than evil.

I have called my book “The Wounded Heel” because these “letters to comrades” deal with the subject of our warfare within and without.

For my part I want to bear witness that during that warfare we have infinite cause for thanksgiving, since God who calls us to the battle is Almighty Love. It is His battle which we fight.

Evil and pain are in the process of extinction. And even now they are not really dominant. Nay, bad as they are, they have their actual use, or they would not be allowed to exist. The grumblers are wrong, though they can make out a plausible case on behalf

of those who are always more ready to complain than to be thankful.

The serpent still makes his false charges against God as he did of old in the garden of Eden. Let us face them, and we shall find that they will shrink and vanish. Do not let us be daunted by them. An absolute victory is coming.

Meanwhile let us take comfort by the way.

For even in this poor maligned world there is much happiness. How few willingly leave it! If we look at evils askance they swell and grow terrible. If we face them they diminish and cover their faces. I think we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for magnifying our troubles as we often do.

How lovely is the world, how wonderful is its adaptation to our needs. What fair sights and what delightful sounds are within reach of us. How exulting are children and lovers. How peaceful are maturity and age. A good Providence has guided and protected us up to this very hour. How right for us in their time have our troubles and anxieties proved! Shall we not be thankful?

I hope I am not wrong in reprinting these letters. I know that they cannot be so interesting to anybody else as they are to me, but they contain the best I have had to give since my last book was printed. I do not think their matter is trite or twaddling. The book will be full of truisms in a few years, I hope, just as the questions of forty years ago have now truisms for their answers.

I have not crossed out all repetitions, for I find I myself often need to be told the same things more than once in slightly different ways.

My chief themes are counsel as to trouble and sin (our own and other people's), and a firm belief that God is Almighty Love, and is manifested in Christ.

I allow myself a merry heart sometimes, and I give you the best I have to give.

E.C.







## THE WOUNDED HEEL.

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37, KENSINGTON SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.

DEAR COMRADES,—

This letter will reach you in the despised but happy month of November. The winter's work is beginning, and we find that the dark and gloomy evenings are *for us*, and not against us. For people are more willing than they were in the summer to be inside Mission Halls. Our happiness depends on the way we look at things. We can generally choose whether we will be glad or sad.

November is to me, as a painter, the most beautiful month in the year. The strewn russet leaves are beginning to cover the green grass, and the trees are more exquisite than ever, for they display the forms of their branches and yet keep much of their golden foliage. They are fading, but on in front there are spring and summer.

And we, with our measure of sadness and disappointment, are working for a glorious time that is surely approaching, when God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. He will be absolutely victorious,

and when His "judgments are made manifest" we shall see that evil and pain and distress have all played their part in the glory which is revealed.

God bless you, every one. I pray for you all *by name*.

If you have any special case of distress, which you cannot help locally, let me know. Old, destitute people should generally be advised to go to the Union and should be honourably visited there.

Let us take to-day for our subject the grand and stately

#### 107TH PSALM.

It is the Psalm which Elizabeth Fry used to read to the prisoners in Newgate

Only last year I made the acquaintance of a lady who had accompanied her in these pioneer visits, Mrs. Hanbury, the Quakeress, who died lately at the age of 108.

We are told that to hear Mrs. Fry read this Psalm was an experience never to be forgotten. Her sweet voice with its varying tones of joy and sorrow, of warning, and sympathy, rang like an angel's voice through the ghastly prison. We can hardly believe that only 70 years ago our prisoners were herded together, almost without food (except such as their friends brought to them and put through the bars), without regard of sex, or crime, and in a place through which an open sewer ran. It was truly a *hell* of a place, avoided by the good and cursed by the bad. To this, as an angel of God, touched with pity for sin and anguish, came the great Elizabeth Fry, with God's Word and a heart

of love, as her two weapons. Surely she must have been inspired in selecting this exquisite Psalm to touch the hearts of the wretched sin-stained people. No harsh word is written in it, though it deals with the sin and folly which the eyes of the Psalmist were wide open to behold. Of course, it begins and ends with praise of God, for the writer gloried in Him and trusted Him in the darkness as well as in the light.

It is divided into five parts, each of which begins and ends with a burst of praise. It is an extremely poetic psalm, consisting of a series of lovely pictures, and recounting the experiences of those who through trial and evil and trouble came, by God's grace, to peace and joy. Emigrants, prisoners, foolish sinners, seafarers, and those who are tossed about by the vicissitudes and mutability of life, are its subject.

I think that there is no chapter in the Bible which contains such a succession of varying light and shade ; its tone keeps shifting from the minor to the major key.

In the first section emigrants are called upon (as those whom God has redeemed and delivered) to give thanks to Him. They are gathered out "from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south." How beautifully it is told! The words remind us of the people whom our Lord claimed from the four quarters of the world, that they might come and sit down in His Father's kingdom.

It is, no doubt, all a parable of our soul's story, though primarily it tells, I suppose, of Israel coming

out of Egypt into the promised land, and of other wanderers in the world's history. They went astray like the rest of us—in the wilderness, and found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

“For nothing else can satisfy  
The soul that longs for God.”

“Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He led them forth by the right way that they might go to the city where they dwelt.” What a picture it raises in our hearts and minds of the dark and dreary wilderness with occasional pools of refreshing water, and oases like Elim where palm trees and wells are found for the panting, thirsty traveller. And then in the distance appear the towers of the holy “city where they would be!”

I scarcely know anything in literature so charming for reading aloud as the 107th Psalm. In my prayer-book I have painted the margin in various appropriate colours—gold for gladness, black for sadness, blue for prayer, red for deliverance, and green for psalms. The voice falters and the tears rise as one reads it. I believe that if you devote three or four hours to the study of this Psalm that God will teach you how to make it an eternal blessing to those among whom you are working.

After the emigration section comes the subject of prisoners—guilty of rebellion and pride, and fast bound with iron, helpless, and with heavy hearts.

And yet they are blessed by their trouble, for it causes them to cry to God in their despair, and then by His grace and power they triumph. For the gates of brass are broken, and the bars of iron smitten asunder. So that their tongues are loosed for joyful praise.

How eagerly the eyes in Newgate must have been rivetted on the gentle evangelist as she read the story.

The third triumph is for poor silly fools. They were suffering for their own evil doings—disease was eating into their very bones, and they were hard at death's door. But there was a Saviour for them. They cried unto the Lord and He sent His Word and healed them and saved them. It was that same Word which was made flesh, and came and dwelt among men for their salvation.

Poor "fools!" How they must thank God that they suffered and were terrified, and thus through great tribulation were saved. Those whose life and health have been nearly all consumed by sin may yet triumph and have peace here and glory hereafter. How my heart rejoiced last August in the histories of the three brothers at Bolton who had been raised from drunkenness and misery, and whose feet were now set on the Rock of Ages. "Oh that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men."

The fourth section treats of seafaring men, and of the dangers which they meet till God brings them into the haven where they would be, and gives them rest and gladness. Like them we some-

times mount up to the heaven, and go down again to the depths. But there is one with us all the time, Who, though He may seem to be asleep and out of sight, is ever watching and caring.

Fifthly, and lastly, comes the great subject of Mutability—of the vicissitudes, and ups and downs of life. Floods are turned into a wilderness and fruitful lands into a desert, and, back again to verdure and prosperity. The hungry are fed, the slaves are delivered, the poor become rich, and God's hand is in it all for blessing, so that those who ponder these things in humble faith will understand that behind the mystery of evil is the loving kindness of the Lord. May God bless the lesson to us, and cause it to bring forth fruit in our lives. Praise be to His Name!

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As I get older I thank God that His Gospel becomes more and more simple to me. Though the necessity of goodness has never been so clear as it is now, yet never have the fairness and simplicity of salvation been also so evident. Mists keep clearing away, and what used to look contradictory has become plain."

In former years I found great difficulties in reconciling the two sides of truth, and I have no doubt that many persons feel about it just as I used to feel. How good it is when at last we get (as it were) the right spectacles to see with, so that all looks natural, and right, and easy of belief. It is no doubt God's will there should be for a time difficulty in reconciling the two doctrines (which are both plainly set forth hundreds

of times in the Bible)—salvation by faith, without works, and yet the condemnation of all those who have no good works to show. What is the explanation?

Some people say that works have nothing to do with salvation, but that as goodness always follows real faith, therefore the faith of those who are not good cannot be the right faith.

As a matter of fact, we all know people whom we trust have faith in Christ, and yet who are so very imperfect and faulty that we scarcely know how they can scrape through to heaven. And on the other hand there are people who claim to have only a very imperfect faith, and yet who are good and Christ-like persons. What is to become of them? We are told that the good will certainly be saved, and that nobody can be good except through God; so it is not an easy question to answer, and probably God did not intend us to answer it easily—any more than He would give a direct answer to the disciples' question—"Are there few that shall be saved?"

And then again, we believe that Christ *saved the world* and *took away its sins*, and that He will see of the travail of His soul and be *satisfied*. And yet such a fraction of the world's inhabitants *seem* to be properly saved. What does it mean?

All through the Bible (and especially in our Lord's teaching) goodness and holiness are spoken of as necessary to salvation; and evildoers, and backsliders are condemned quite irrespectively of their professed faith. So strongly is this inculcated that we are told



by St. Paul that even heathens *if they do well* are accepted by God. How are we to find our way through this labyrinth of difficulties? Is it possible to hold apparently contradictory truths without either infringing upon the other? I think that it is not only possible, but simple.

I believe that the Gospel cannot be made too simple, too generous, and too effective, and also that the necessity of goodness and holiness cannot be made too stringent.

Firstly, then, What is THE GOSPEL? Certainly it is good news, and not—as some preachers have made it out—very bad and lamentable news.

God our Father is our faithful Creator. He is Almighty Love. He so loved the world that He gave His Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. In other words, He became incarnate in Christ for our salvation. The Lamb of God took away the sins of the world. Whosoever comes to Him cannot be cast out. He has (as we say in the "Te Deum") opened "the kingdom of heaven to all believers." He is our life. He has borne our sins, and given to us His righteousness. He has identified Himself with humanity. He saves those who are sinful and weak. Forgiveness for past sins is complete and immediate, through Christ's death.

It is impossible to put all this too simply, too freely, or too joyfully. All are easily saved who look to Christ. He has won salvation for the world. Let



us preach this Gospel with all our hearts and souls, to all poor lost sinful repentant souls who will let themselves be won. Blessed be God for the gift of Christ, and for the New Man created in us, Who is "Christ the hope of glory." His righteousness is truly ours. It is *easy* to be saved—as it was easy to look at the brazen serpent and be healed. It is as easy as those would *expect* it to be *who know God*.

But it is clear that even after all this is given and received, there is still a difficult work to be accomplished before salvation can be considered complete, and before the soul can see the Lord with comfort. In fact it is easy to be forgiven and saved from hell, but difficult to be made so pure and holy that we can be for ever with the Lord in joy, and peace, and comfort. This is why in the New Testament so much more attention is given to directions, warnings, and advice to Christians about being good than is given to the subjects of forgiveness and salvation from hell for outsiders. The foolish, careless virgins are not admitted to the marriage—Christ "knows not" those who come saying, "Lord, Lord" while they are workers of iniquity. Even St. Paul felt there was danger of his being a castaway, and bids us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The dangers which Christ specifies in His messages to the seven churches in Asia are terrible dangers, and dangers for all. Do not let us weaken or leave out either of these truths.

Our business as officers of the Church Army is to

preach the two things—salvation and goodness. The first is easy; the second is difficult. I cannot tell you *how* God will deal with those who die saved, but not holy. He has not revealed this to us, nor is it likely that He would reveal it. We are told that none without holiness shall see the Lord, but we are not told how those who die unholy are to be made holy. Souls in heaven will differ (like stars) in their degrees of glory, but there are some here who are forgiven and possessed of Christ and His righteousness and yet who have little practical goodness and little fruit to show. There are some to whom Christ says "Fear Him who is able to destroy body and soul, in hell." Man does not consist only of body and soul, but of body, soul, and spirit. We are told that God *gives the spirit* (Ecc. xii. 12-7), and that whatsoever is born of Him sinneth not. If our Spirit is purely Divine it cannot sin, as our body and soul can sin. But alas for those whose bodies and souls are in danger of being castaways. Evidently the peril is tremendous of not being conformed to the image of Christ. How lightly and heedlessly Christians allow themselves to sin! What loss they suffer—carelessly supposing that because Christ died for them and blotted out their sins they need mind little about their character, their faults, and their deeds.

In meditating on this stern necessity for goodness we must never for an instant lose the sense of the tender love of God to sinners. It would be a poor love which would acquiesce in the beloved one being

evil and unholy. For only in goodness can there be comfort, and peace, and joy. God's way seems to me so simple, and right, and fair, and loving, that it is strange that men should ever have imagined or wished that there could be any other way.

He has done *all* for us as to forgiveness. But as to goodness we have our part to do, and it is because we often do it so half-heartedly that the fear (which ought to be cast out by love) comes in and makes us justly afraid. It is perhaps not too much to say that out of a hundred parts of the Bible ninety-nine have the object of inciting us to goodness.

How sadly the character of God has been misrepresented even by true servants of His. His love to us is a favourite topic with preachers. But sometimes, when we investigate the sermon, it seems as if the love could not amount to very much.

Mankind has been taught—by men—so much that is alarming and terrible about His wrath and anger, His fury and judgments, that the listener wonders how the truths of Fatherhood and Love are to be fitted in. We know that the best fathers are gentle, indulgent and loving. It is not that they are kind only for one moment, and then become suddenly furious, severe and implacable. No, indeed. Some people think it is best not to face the matter at all lest the apparent contradictions should prove too dangerous for their fragile faith. But children of God need never be afraid to face anything, for they know—or ought to know—that God is firstly and certainly Almighty

Love. This means an immense deal, and if any doctrine clashes with this belief there must be a mistake somewhere.

It is quite true that He is a consuming Fire, but He is a holy and blessed Fire, and it is only *evil* that—for Love's sake—He consumes. There are many evils that can only be got rid of by fire. After the great plague in London (during Charles the Second's reign) there came the fire which cleansed and saved London as nothing else could have done. In our Labour Homes we find that some clothes, even if they are very dirty, can be made right by being exposed to great heat and baked. But there are others which are so bad and filthy that the only salvation is to burn them. Then they turn into clean ashes and into wholesome gases. Fire is a friend and not a foe.

And Love is a Fire. The Holy Ghost descends as tongues of Fire. God is a Fire. But He never hates anything that He has made. It is we who have belied Him with our crude ignorance and pride. God is love, and when His beloved ones are perfected He rests. Never—to anyone—is He anything but Love. And as we get a nearer sight of heaven this becomes clearer and clearer.

Great surprises are, I believe, before us as to this love of His—as to its length and breadth and depth and height. Fear is to be cast out, and only Love to remain. But as yet fear is not cast out with most of us. I often *fear* when I realize my faults, and how hard and slow is the getting rid of them. What an

untired foe sin is! And yet it *will* get outworn by and-bye, and God will triumph absolutely and completely. Our tendency is to rejoice bravely in God *too little*. I am ashamed to say, that even now I often hesitate to believe that He desires me to be happy, and to rejoice with a free heart at His gifts of grace. "The Lord hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servants." All this goodness and beauty around me now is of His ordering. What work and rest and friends and books and happiness He has given me! Shall I not be grateful? Is it not a foretaste of what will be in eternity "when the years have passed away"? Oh, let us believe in the infinite Love of God to every creature and every thing which He has made. May God's Spirit inspire us as we meditate on a blessed heaven and on an awful hell.

There are few days when I do not think of death and our after-state. How short our time here is! and how long is eternity! I can believe that when we come to rest in His Presence under the tree of life, that there will be conferences and testimonies given, something like the five following—only, a thousand times better.

I can imagine a soul saying: "Praise God! Trust Him! Thank Him! Love Him! Rest in Him! Live in Him, dear friends, on earth. *Here* in heaven our hearts *must* be full of gladness—our opportunity for thanksgiving *in darkness and trial and sorrow* is past when we reach the *sight* of Him.

I am glad that I kept praising God when I was on earth, but I wish I had done it more.

I passed through death one day, as you know, and as I 'died' I found that (as Christ had said) there *was no death*. The watchers round my bed said, 'He is dead, and all is over.' But death only meant that I now laid aside my body and that it was to pass through the grave into new forms in the world of matter. I escaped from it gratefully, and now, with clearer vision, I am learning what I had begun to learn before, that *all is well*, because *God is Almighty Love*. While I lived I knew it and believed it, but sometimes only haltingly, and with fears which I now blush to have allowed. Sin, weakness and darkness had sometimes dimmed my faith and had sometimes corroded it and made me unfaithful; but generally I felt and knew that through all my life God had done well for me—the very best that could be done. I had proved that pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, darkness and light, work and play, peace and conflict had all been given me in the right measure by abundant Love. All had been exactly right. But at times I had not had the courage and wisdom to feel sure that God, Who had proved Himself to be Almighty Love to me, could never be anything else to any of His Creation. I could thank Him for what I had suffered of sorrow and groaning; but the pain and evil of others staggered me, and I had a haunting fear that if insanity came to me, or disgrace, or constant anguish, or spiritual darkness, I might find myself bereft of God. Now I know how vain my fears were. He blesses our going out and our coming in for ever and

ever. For ever God must be and will be with us, and He is unchangeable Love. He is our faithful Creator, giving us 'all things' in a generous loving fashion. Trust and gratitude and love are almost the only return we can make Him—and if we fail here, we grieve Him sorely. If we only knew how our trust in Him rejoices our Father in heaven! It is the chief thing by which we can please Him. For He knows that it is a triumph for those who are still in the flesh to see Him Who is invisible, and to rest in His Love through anxiety, distress and pain. How often men ungratefully complain when they ought to be giving thanks! If they would but thank Him they would find the key to their trouble. How sad it is that anybody should choose to live in the shade when the step out into the sunshine is so easy and simple! I look back now and I remember how beautiful and good God's world was, and I wonder that gloomy hearts allowed themselves to drink so little of its joy. Almost everything praised Him, except poor sinsick Humanity, which chose to believe that evil and suffering were the rule rather than goodness and happiness. We ought to have been overflowing with gladness at Nature's revelation of His beauty and Love and care.

And yet I do not know that the sadness was altogether strange. We put a bulb into the dark cold earth to be fed with the earth's essences while it slowly expands and bursts and strikes root. It is kept by the weight of the earth and by frost and

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darkness from growing too quickly. It does not know of the flowers and seed that are surely coming from it. The life in an egg is pressed and bound, and gets uglier and uglier within the shell, and has no knowledge that it is being made day by day into a winged and singing bird with a home in the sky.

How men cavil and tremble at the thought of evil and pain, and how they wonder if it will come upon them and annihilate them! How foolish they are to listen, as Tennyson says, to

‘That bitter voice,

More than to that which says—Rejoice, Rejoice!’

I know *now* that no evil and no pain are permitted on earth except by God’s will and for our good. Now I can read faithful promises from Him in every bird and flower and tree and river and mountain, in every sunrise and sunset, in every gracious man and woman, in every holy song, even in every taste and touch. It used to give me a qualm to think of the immensity of the universe, and of our world being such a tiny speck in it. But now I know that no space is too wide for God to fill, and no insect too minute for Him to perfect. He is like the sun, whose warmth and life and power keep our little earth in safety and comfort and beauty, while yet we only use the tiniest fraction of the heat and life which it is continually pouring forth into space. We are just a speck which intercepts *one ray* for our own use. And God’s love and care are infinite in the same wonderful fashion. Every man and woman, every bird, every insect can



have as much love and care and power as is needed—for the supply is boundless, for ever and ever.”

How easily we can imagine such praise in heaven !

I will give you four more testimonies, which are all *real*.

The second was given me by a poor old man who was dying of leprosy, in the Sandwich Islands. His words made a great impression on me, and it is easy to imagine that he repeats them in heaven.

“When I was on earth, people pitied me because I became a leper at Molokai, and blind ; but I know that it was all a blessing, for my trouble led me to God from an evil, wicked life. Nothing else would have done it, I think. And all through my long dying I was day by day cared for by God, and could see the tokens of His Love.”

The next words I quote are true of a lady I knew who has lately died.

“I had everything that life could give me, wealth, talent, beauty, and a happy life with beloved children. Then, I was stricken with slow illness, and it took me seven years to reach my grave, but I found that all was well. The years of my pain were the best years of my life. I had peace and comfort, and I had always the knowledge that God did what was best. And day by day beautiful and good things kept coming to me.”

#### FOURTH TESTIMONY.

“With me it was different. All my troubles came to me by my own fault. I was wilful and self-

indulgent, and I sinned and failed, and sinned again. And the punishment and discipline came. At first I felt that it was unbearable, because it was all from my own fault. But I learnt that I might, in deep humility, be glad that God should thus hold me and teach me and rid me of my sin. I accepted His grace, and I learnt to be thankful for it. And then all nature began to smile, and I found 'streams in the desert,' and was comforted on every side."

#### FIFTH TESTIMONY.

"My only trouble was my fear and my discontent. I had a long life, full of blessings, but I always dreaded that they would be taken from me, and so I was afraid to enjoy them. My greatest treasure for fifty years was my sister. She grew old, and peacefully died. Then I gave myself over to misery and complaints. How could I have been so foolish? Alas! Nothing would have so grieved her and distressed her. Why could I not have said 'God's will be done'? I was tenderly cared for, but I hugged my grief and made a god of it. God pitied and loved me, and here I am. But what an opportunity of praising Him I have lost. Now I know that all was for the best. I needed to lean elsewhere than on my prop. And she, had she lived, must have lived a life full of pain and failing powers, instead of enjoying peace and health and gladness in heaven. Oh, if I had believed that God knew best! If I had but taken the cup from His hand, and known that all must be blessing!

I see it now, but it is too late for me to honour God by trusting Him in sorrow."

Perhaps some of you, dear comrades, may find it profitable to write down *to God* your present testimony of what He has done for you, and of what He is to you. Try and antedate what will be your testimony in heaven.

And now once more I will state the gospel news before I close. I know you will not be tired of it.

Every one who wishes it can have every sin forgiven at once and be saved from hell. All that is necessary is to truly desire to turn from sin, and to believe in Christ. God our Father has made salvation an easy, simple thing, so that a child, or an idiot, or a great sinner may alike be immediately saved.

But much more than forgiveness and salvation from hell is necessary if we are to meet God with comfort and joy. For we are told that "none without holiness shall see the Lord." And to become good and holy is, with most of us, a slow and difficult work. It takes all our energy, and needs much self-denial. It needs also prayer, and faith, and daily confession of sin.

We see then that salvation is easy and instantaneous in its first stage, and difficult and slow in its later stages. When we get this clearly into our hearts and minds, then the apparently conflicting statements in the Bible become clear.

All depends on the grace of God by which we first believe and receive, and by which also we afterwards live the Christian life and grow into the likeness of Christ.

Many people are confused about this. It seems to them presumptuous to say that they are saved while they are conscious of so much evil within, and they feel they ought not to class themselves as good and religious people. So they remain as a kind of outsiders, with a little faith, and just enough grace to keep them from absolute spiritual death. Such persons should make themselves at once clear on these points by careful study of the Bible and Prayer Book. They may receive complete forgiveness at once, *unless they intend and wish to go on sinning*. This determination would, of course, make forgiveness impossible, and any who come to God for pardon and at the same time mean to continue in sin, are in a very fearful state, and if they died, would, I suppose, find themselves in hell.

But weakness and sinfulness, and many grievous falls do not deprive any man or woman of God's free gifts of forgiveness and spiritual life. It is dishonouring Him to allow our sense of unworthiness to make us doubt His generous love and His clear promises. Whosoever will may come and take the gift bought for all by Christ.

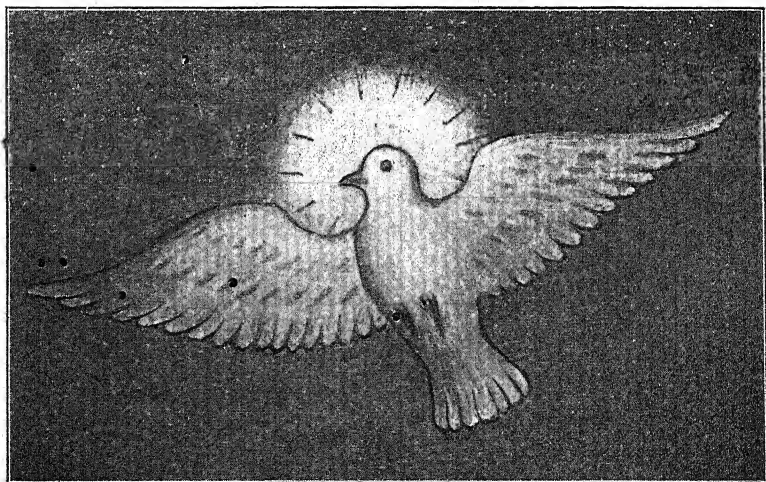
And no one is fitter for the long subsequent conflict with evil because he or she doubts about the foundation rock on which the feet are placed. It is terrible to think how many persons leave this world with the great opportunity lost of becoming like the Saviour who has died for them. None are perfect, but how different are the degrees of imperfection. I send you with this

a short summary of this lesson in the form of a little book called "Easy and Difficult," which I hope will be a blessing to souls who are seeking salvation for themselves or for others. Copies can be bought from our C.A. Publishing department.

And now, Farewell. Rise early, and have daily talks with our Lord. Keep your consciences perfectly cleansed and pure.

God bless you. God be praised !

E.C.



*November, 1903.*

DEAR COMRADES,

It is Sunday morning, and the Church bells are ringing joyfully as I write to you. It is good to hope that all of us are living in the spirit of them. Their sound is full of hope, and gladness, and sadness, and holiness, and beauty.

I thank GOD for Church bells. I wonder what souls GOD will use us to-day to bless and save.

May His Spirit and His Salvation be mighty in us.

I have just been going through the list of your names, one by one, with prayers and thanksgiving. Some of the names I linger over, as I recall your special needs and circumstances. Others I commit to Him Who alone knows just what particular blessing and spiritual food you are now requiring. It may be faith, or love, or praise, or conviction (through the Holy Ghost) of wrongness. May GOD supply the want whatever it is.

And now for our Lesson.

When our Cadets come into training, I always ask them some questions about the Bible, and it troubles me to find that some of them are very ignorant of it. No doubt GOD can save and bless those who know very little. Even Christ's disciples, while they lived with Him in Galilee, were strangely ignorant.

But those who are called to be Evangelists ought to know more about the Bible than a few gospel texts and a little smattering of the narratives and parables. Sometimes I ask the question, "Can you tell me anything about any of St. Paul's Epistles, anything in which one of them differs from the others?" And occasionally I can get no answer to the question, though everyone *ought* to know (for instance) that the Epistle to the Galatians is occupied with an error about circumcision and faith. And if the New Testament has been intelligently read, there ought surely to be a knowledge of the chief characteristics of the other Epistles. If we know our Bible so very slightly, how can we instruct others? Religion is not a slight thing, and let us remember that the source from which it reaches us is principally the Bible. Its fresh, strong growths come largely from this wonderful Book, which is not only its safeguard, but its inspired life. Religion without the Bible (when the Bible is to be had) is a poor thing. I have never known a Christian of power and attainment who had not continually studied it and fed on it.

I do not wish to be understood to mean that no true religion is possible without the Bible. GOD is not bound by His sacraments, and He is not bound by the Bible. Socrates had no Bible, but he sought and found GOD, and, no doubt, many others have done likewise. But that is no reason why you and I should not study it day by day with our hearts and minds. It is the Bread which GOD has given us to feed

on, so Christ said. What do we not owe to it!

Undoubtedly we should spend a considerable time each day in reading and pondering it. Alone of all books in the world, it is inexhaustible, and comes home to us with fresh power in every phase and crisis of life.

There is such a thing as *Bibliolatry*, but that does not mean loving the Bible too much. It means claiming for it certain qualities which it does not itself claim to possess, and which would spoil it and even invalidate it if they *did* exist.

The Bible does not open its secrets to those who read it carelessly and indifferently. But to the man who loves it there are no unwelcome mysteries. All is clear, or *better than clear*. For it would be a less Divine Book than it is if it could be all understood without any trouble.

In these bi-monthly Bible lessons I do not want to save you from searching for yourself in the Scriptures, for what *you* find there will help you much more than what *I* find.

But I will now give you the kind of answer that I should give if you asked me, as I sometimes ask our cadets, "Can you tell me anything about the Epistle of St. Paul to the

#### ROMANS?"

My answer would be something as follows:—

This Epistle is pre-eminent for its clear, determined teaching of *Salvation*—of its need, its character, and its results.



It has sixteen chapters, of which the subjects are (roughly) as follows :—

- Chapter 1.—Man is guilty.  
„ 2.—Jews cannot judge others severely.  
For Gentiles and heathen may be better than they.  
„ 3.—All men have sinned, therefore the Gospel is necessary.  
„ 4.—Justification by faith.  
„ 5.—Goodness must be its result.  
„ 6.—How to get rid of sinfulness.  
„ 7.—The misery of sinfulness.  
„ 8.—Deliverance and rapture.  
„ 9.—The difficulties of the doctrine of election.  
„ 10.—Salvation  
„ 11.—Light on election. The perfect solution of the difficulty.  
„ 12.—*Therefore* be good.  
„ 13.—Be good.  
„ 14.—Be kind.  
„ 15.—Be good and kind. Remember me.  
„ 16.—Greetings.

With three exceptions, St. Paul's epistles contain an overflowing measure of praise of those to whom he is writing. In fact, he is a *master* in praising.

The Epistle to the Galatians is an exception, for he is too vexed and impatient with them to be able to praise. He begins and continues with indignant blame, but it is affectionate blame. And he knows and

trusts Timothy and Titus so well that direct praise is unnecessary when he writes to them, which is in itself a kind of praise. But all other recipients of his letters get warm commendation. (What a lesson this is to us in our dealings with others.)

The 1st chapter of Romans tells us some awful facts about sin and its horrors. *What a blessing* is horror at sin, that *recoil* which GOD gives sometimes in moments which might lead to a fall if it were not for the sudden "pull up" and shock which the presentation of evil creates in our better nature.

The 2nd chapter is one of my favourites in the New Testament. I especially value the first sixteen verses, which speak of the love and justice of GOD towards those who have died without hearing of JESUS CHRIST, and yet who have sought GOD and done right. "Glory, honour, and peace" are their reward. So St. Paul says. And we must swallow this whether we like it or not!

It does not concern us to decide by what means and to what degree the unevangelised heathen can obtain salvation. The power of Satan is very great in heathendom, but we are told clearly in this chapter that a measure of Light is given to them by which they may reach Salvation. The true Light (St. John tells us), lights "every man that cometh into the world." "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me," said Christ.

The latter part of this chapter, and the beginning of the third chapter, are taken up with answering

difficulties about the privileges of the Jews—real difficulties. And they are solved. The upshot is that all human beings are guilty, and need the free gift of GOD'S salvation.

And then, in the last ten verses, this salvation is declared and defined as follows: GOD has set forth Jesus Christ to bring to Himself—through faith in His blood—all repentant sinners.

The 4th chapter is entirely taken up with the further emphasis of the great doctrine of justification by faith. It may be called the "Abraham chapter," for all through it he is spoken of as our example.

It was this doctrine for which Luther fought—tooth and nail—at the time of the Reformation. There are people who regard him with animosity, but the opinion of posterity, generally, is that—though by no means faultless—he was one of the bravest, grandest, and most simple-hearted men that ever lived and died, and that we owe to him (more than to any other man) our freedom of religious thought to-day. He fought against tremendous odds, and he conquered. If any of you can get the first volume of "Short Studies on Great Subjects," by T. A. Froude, and read in it the essay on the "Times of Erasmus and Luther," you will be repaid, and will be, I think, better and wiser for having absorbed it.

It seems a bold thing to say that a man can be saved by believing in Christ and receiving Him as his Saviour. But there are two things to be borne in mind about this doctrine. First, that it is *not* strange

(as people used to say it was) that our Creator, Who is Almighty Love, should save us freely and easily. It is all quite natural.

Secondly, that living faith in Christ is a quality which gradually changes the whole nature from bad to good. It is not only a dogma, but a living force.

The doctrine is capable, like all truth, of being misunderstood and abused, but it is a doctrine which gives us peace in living and in dying, and which *must* bring goodness with it if it is truly received.

In the great 5th chapter St. Paul deals with its chief danger. It appears as if very early in the Church, there were people who claimed that if salvation was by faith and not by works, they might as well go on sinning. To this St. Paul again and again says an emphatic "*No.*"

If we are justified by faith, we have peace, and grace, and patience, and joy, and the Holy Ghost. So that if there is no change in the life, we may feel sure that there is no living faith in Christ.

This is, I believe, the only chapter in the Bible from which the doctrine of original sin (whatever that may mean) is deduced, and here it only comes in incidentally to explain the glory which is coming finally. I have never met anyone who was able to explain clearly or satisfactorily what is meant by original sin, and as it is not a Bible expression, I think we can get on pretty well without it. If it means that babies are guilty of Adam's sin, of course it is nonsense. If it means that we are all sinful, it is absolutely true.

It is a good rule not to use expressions that cannot be explained.

The 6th chapter is a continuation of the 5th. It deals with the question of how Christians are to get rid of their sinfulness, and to become holy. The part about baptism is specially valuable. We are buried with Christ in baptism and risen with Him, and, therefore, we are to reckon ourselves "dead, and alive again to GOD."

"As a man thinketh, so is he." There is a deep and practical truth in this, and we are continually proving it. If we steadily cultivate faith and hope about ourselves and about others, half the victory is won. So true is this that we find what may be almost called faith miracles sometimes accomplished even by "Christian Science," as well as at Lourdes, in France, and by different sects in America. Many diseases are curable by the mind, and it is foolish and wrong to deny the cures because we do not know how to square them with our own beliefs. Most of us know how much harm can be done both to children and grown up people by insisting on it that they are downright bad.

Do we not ourselves almost feel degraded or base or mad, if other people think us so, and say so? "Not always," you will truly answer. But the determination to think evil and speak evil is a terrible thing, and often acts like a curse. Therefore, St. Paul's advice is good, to recognise our evil and hate it, and then to believe with all our heart, and soul, and

mind, and strength, that Christ delivers us from it.

And now we come and listen to the sad minor tones of the 7th chapter.

How often we have pondered over its agony, its hope, its disappointment, and its almost maddening difficulty! Is any chapter in the Bible such a puzzle? Surely, even the most elaborate and well-meaning explanations still leave us in twilight on some points. And yet, how practical and vitally important to us the chapter is!

*Can we be rid of sin here*—of trespasses, of sinfulness?

These are the questions we long to have answered!

“I know a baseness in my blood,  
At such strange war with what is good,  
I may not do the thing I would.”

(*Tennyspn.*)

This is the puzzle for us all.

Was St. Paul, himself, rid of sinfulness? What does he mean us to understand by his apparent contradictions? Deliverance and triumph alternate with slavery and misery. Hope, holiness, and repentance keep hand in hand.

We hesitate to accept unreservedly the solutions and positions which he successively sets before us. We also hesitate to accept as patterns, the good people who say that they have reached the place of continual triumph. They are good, but are they good enough and nice enough to justify such a high claim? We do not feel sure that they are. We should like something better. We even think we know better people

who claim less. We dread self-complacency even more than faultiness. We listen with a sad smile when we hear people who have been at excellent conferences tell us that there *was* a time *once* when they were not perfectly humble and sweet tempered and self-denying, but that now their faults have been absolutely cured!

Meanwhile, we groan over our own failures, our weakness, and our persistent worrying sins. Hills and valleys are our experience, and we cannot ignore the valleys—the valleys of humiliation. Holiness still tantalises us with its prospects.

“If spells forbid the voyager to land,  
What comfort is it that there comes to us  
A fragrant notice of a pleasant shore,  
Wafted at intervals from many a bower  
Of blissful gratitude and fearless love?”

(Wordsworth.)

But I think the comfort avails much, for possession of that pleasant shore is surely *coming later on*—after patience and trial have done their work.

Perhaps some day we shall look back and thank God that the perfecting was slow, and shall prove the value and beauty of the long discipline of life.

“Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations  
Outlive men's lives, and lives of nations.”

Meanwhile, what cries go up to God from those who are in training for saints! Here is one from a soul that became marvellously beautiful afterwards.

“O Holy Lord, Who with the children three  
Didst walk the piercing flame;  
Help in those trial hours which save to Thee,  
I dare not name.

Nor let these quivering eyes and sickening heart,  
 Crumble to dust beneath the temper's dart,  
 Till I am Thine, with my whole soul ; and fear  
 (Not feel a secret joy) when hell is near."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Oh Holiest Truth ! how have I lied to Thee ?  
 I vowed this day Thy sacrifice to be,  
 But I am dim e'er night.  
 Surely I made my prayer, and I did deem  
 That I could keep me in Thy morning beam  
 Immaculate and bright.  
 But my foot slipped ! And as I lay he came—  
 My gloomy foe—and robbed me of Heaven's flame.  
 Help Thou my darkness Lord till I am bright."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Wert Thou not God, I then might think  
 Thou had'st no eye to read  
 The baseness of that sinful heart,  
 For which Thine Own did bleed.  
 But Thou art God and knowest all :  
 Dear Lord Thou knowest me,  
 And yet Thy knowledge hinders not,  
 Thy love's sweet liberty."

There is a beautiful saying of Froude's about Newman : "When we students were wrong, he knew *why* we were wrong, and he excused our mistakes to us while he set us right." Have we not often felt this about our Lord—the good Physician ? Have we not often been surprised that He forgives so easily, so hopefully, and so lovingly ?

And yet, we feel the loss that comes through every sin—the loss of joy and power. George Herbert has said : "If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains ; if, well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains."

And now we come to the shining 8th chapter—the chapter of ABUNDANCE. It does indeed take us to



mountain tops, where in heavenly air we descry a wide and glorious distance. It is like the beautiful tumultuous Church bells which I am listening to as I now write. They are full of pathos, and gladness, and heavenly hope.

The first 14 verses deal with the happy results of walking in the Spirit. Verses 14 to 21 tell us of our blessings as children of GOD. From the 21st verse to the end we have promises—almost foretastes—of the comfort and safety and joy that are surely to come out of our present groans and distress.

Some of its verses (like the 11th), hint at beautiful mysteries, which, as yet, we can scarcely fathom. What is the meaning of the quickening of our mortal bodies while we are alive? Think of this, and try to understand.

Others, like the 20th, make kind and tender excuses for our fallen state, and teach us that even out of the evil there will result splendours which are beyond our ken. St. Paul does not scruple—inspired by the Holy Ghost—to declare that all things work together for good.

He is very bold—bolder than we should dare to be. He deals with the most difficult questions of humanity, and gives the only satisfactory answer (in the 18th and following verses) that can be given as to the existence of evil and pain. The inspiration that is upon him seems to get fuller and fuller as he approaches the magnificent climax of the last verses. GOD be praised and loved for ever with all our hearts, and minds, and souls.

The present anguish of the world, the mystery of sin, the apparent unfairness of election, are difficulties no longer. All have been absorbed in the infinite love and wisdom of GOD.

In this 8th chapter St. Paul has gained "a heart at leisure from itself" to grieve, or to desire, or to believe for others. And now there comes what looks like a sudden drop, and he chooses to be most unhappy about his brethen, the Jews. He wrestles once more with the question of election, and he evidently feels how unsatisfactory his first solutions were. It always seems to me odd that the 9th chapter should come after the 8th. But I expect it was written after a considerable interval. I imagine a long uncheerful pause after the 5th verse. How uncomfortable he is at his poor, halting, explanations till they are at last happily ended by the glorious sight he gets of Almighty Love in CHRIST. This settles everything for him, and he rests in a mighty calm of joy and praise at the end of the 11th chapter, which brings him to another beautiful mountain view like that which he had beheld at the beginning of the 8th.

"God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all."

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Can we desire anything better than this? How wise it is to honestly face difficulties, and to work through them instead of running away from them.

And now for the third time he has found peace.

First, it was the peace of salvation from guilt through Christ.

Secondly, it was peace through sanctification by Christ.

Thirdly, it was peace from believing in the final triumph over evil through Christ.

And now, what comes next? What is the result of this glorious discovery of what GOD effects through Christ? Is it a vision of the unseen? Is it rapture at heaven?

No!

It is a coming down to the simple, pure, self-denying every-day life of the true Christian. After the great climax of triumphant faith and hope, he continues :—

*"Therefore, by the mercies of God, I beseech you brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."*

This 12th chapter of Romans is one of the favourite chapters in the Bible. It ranks with the 23rd, 51st, and 103rd Psalms. And with the 53rd of Isaiah, the 15th of Luke, the 3rd and 14th and 17th of John, and the 13th of Corinthians, all of which are chapters which humanity, old and young, has enshrined for its peculiar delight.

I think its special beauty largely consists in its coming after the almost unattainable glories that go before. After the triumph it comes down to talk of our poor estate with a heavenly sweetness and humility. Oh, the power of its "Therefore!"

What beautiful, Christian people it calls up to our mind and heart—humble persons, unworldly, kind,

self-denying, truthful, industrious, happy, and victorious. No wonder that the chapter is loved and cherished. No wonder that it is committed to memory by young and old who desire to follow in the footsteps of Christ. It is so simple and true, and so inspired, that it needs no comment but obedience.

The three next chapters—13, 14, and 15—continue in the same strain. Be good. Be kind. Be good and kind. Remember me. St. Paul has done with agonies and excitement, and he just advises his converts how to behave in a manner worthy of their Lord and Master. After traversing mountains and valleys he has come to a fertile plain. How we need these chapters! How kind and sweet their counsels are, how safe to follow, and yet how often they are disobeyed by people who ought to know better.

Evidently St. Paul had to deal—as we sometimes have—with workers who thought they need not obey rules unless they chose, and who disliked being “subject unto the higher powers.” Loyalty was not always easy then any more than it is now, and there were those who loved to judge others better than they loved being right themselves.

Compare these three chapters with our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. They have much in common.

Some of us have still to learn the lesson of the 14th chapter, to have faith and charity enough to believe in those who differ from us on secondary points.

The C. A. rules about teetotalism, non-smoking, and abstinence from theatres are, we believe, wise rules. But let us never “set at nought” those who differ

from us on these points. Total abstinence may be—and *is* good for the present distress. Smoking is an indulgence, which we feel it well to deny ourselves. Theatres are a source of danger and temptation to so many people, that we cut ourselves off from the pleasure and recreation of plays. But wine and tobacco and acting are all things which *ought* to be good, and which sometimes *are* good. Do not let us make sins of what GOD has not made sins. They *are* sins for those whom they hurt and upset, and for those whose rules forbid them. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD. Let us not therefore judge one another any more."

Alas, how often has it been proved that those who make harsh and unscriptural rules for everybody else on such doubtful points, have themselves fallen headlong into evils about which there is no doubt at all.

Let us always be ready to give an answer "with meekness and grace" to any who ask us our opinion on these matters. But let us be very slow to condemn those who have not been led to see as we see.

The Church Army rule is a safe one. Keep it, and do not go beyond it.

The last chapter is the 16th. Do not think lightly of it, but study it carefully, and drink deep of its spirit. It consists of affectionate greetings to and from friends and acquaintances.

As I have said before, religious and philanthropic people are sometimes *not* affectionate, and it is a very ugly deficiency. St. Paul knows better than to allow this fault in himself. There is here no cheap herding

together of his friends and workers. Very carefully he thinks of them all, one by one, Aquila and Priscilla, and Amplias and Persis and Stachys. And of the *friends* of his great friends, for what is kinder and nicer than to have our friends considered and welcomed and made much of by those whom we love. There is scarcely any form of kindness which gratifies us so much, and it will be found that people who have imbibed the Spirit of Christ have become experts in this grace of affectionate courtesy. Many of you have noticed how it shone in certain women who have helped us at our bazaars and on social occasions (Lady Grosvenor, The Duchess of Marlborough, Lady Somers, Lady Bective, and Lady Stanhope, for instance). Careless people treat strangers in a cheap and offhand way, and scarcely seem to want to know them, but these (*and others with them*) "count nothing common," but let their humility and goodwill beautify every word and touch and action, and send people away glowing with happiness and gratitude. Often they also show their love to sinners by hard work and large money help (as Adeline Duchess of Bedford does).

Probably some of the people whom St. Paul mentioned in the 16th of Romans may have been tiresome bores, though good. But St. Paul did not snub and neglect them because he did not like them so much as he liked some others. They had a right to his attention, and he gladly and lovingly gave it. That is the way to get and to keep workers. Do not despise or reject anyone. Mr. Anstey has written a wonderful story on this subject, called "The Pariah," where he

tells us how an unfortunate and ill behaved young man was snubbed to the very death by people who chose to dislike him for selfish reasons of taste and self-interest.

How beautiful are the concluding words of the epistle! How much richer the world is for this grand, inspired, tender-hearted letter! Thanks be to GOD and St. Paul for it. How much it has helped and blessed us all! May you get a hundred times more out of it than I have indicated.

Here is a poem which is exceedingly beautiful. Let us learn to talk happily, naturally, and reverently of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not generally use His Name "Jesus" alone. It is almost too sacred, and it is better to say "the Lord Jesus," or "Jesus Christ," or "our Lord."

They talked of Jesus as they went,  
 And Jesus, all unknown,  
 Did at their side Himself present,  
 With sweetness all His own.  
 Swift, as He 'op'd the sacred Word,  
 His glory they discerned,  
 And swift, as His dear voice they heard,  
 Their hearts within them burned.  
 He would have left them, but that they  
 With prayers His love assailed:  
 "Depart not yet, a little stay!"  
 They pressed Him, and prevailed.  
 And Jesus was revealed, as there  
 He blessed and brake the bread:  
 But, while they marked His Heavenly air,  
 The matchless Guest had fled.  
 And thus at times when Christians talk  
 Of Jesus and His Word,  
 He joins two friends amidst their walk,  
 And makes, unseen, a third.

And oh ! how sweet their converse flows,  
Their holy theme how clear,  
How warm with love each bosom glows,  
If Jesus be but near !

And they that woo His visits sweet,  
And will not let Him go,  
Oft, while the broken Bread they eat,  
His soul-felt presence know :  
His gathered friends He loves to meet,  
And fill with joy their faith,  
While they with melting hearts repeat  
The memory of His death.

But such sweet visits here are brief,  
Dispensed from stage to stage,  
(A cheering and a prized relief,  
On faith's hard pilgrimage.)  
There is a scene where Jesus ne'er,  
Ne'er leaves His happy guests ;  
He spreads a ceaseless banquet there,  
And love still fires their breasts.

I should like very much to hear from those of our last commissioned officers who have not yet written to me. Remember that difficulties—within and without—are tokens of God's blessing. Neither man nor devil can harm those who are followers of that which is good. Even if we have to sorrowfully own that we have been wrong—by doing or leaving undone—there are ready for us forgiveness and cleansing, and a fresh start. How thankful we ought to be that God has given us lives to be lived for unselfish aims. What safeguards and what blessings this means for us. There are special dangers, but what sloughs and pitfalls we avoid.

May He grant us those two gifts—*Goodness and Inspiration.*



This world has much evil and pain in it, but for all that the world is of God's making, and His desire is that His servants (who are His children) should be full of joy as they pass gratefully through it. Do not let us speak evil of God's world and God's ordering of it. It is a better world than some people try to make out!

E.C.



*July, 1905.*

DEAR COMRADES,

It seems a long time already since our May Conference, when so many of us met and rejoiced together. I believe we never rejoiced so much before! It was a record time.

Let each one of us be specially watchful now, for great dangers often accompany great blessings. Our LORD was tempted by Satan on the pinnacle of the temple after He had overcome the danger from hunger in the wilderness.

We thank you, with all our hearts, for your love and labour, and loyalty. GOD bless us every one.

I want specially to tell the Social Officers how greatly we of the Evangelistic department value their work, and how, more and more, we recognise *them* as Evangelists and soul-winners. They have a tremendous power in this way, and so have their wives.

I want to advise you to-day about a practical subject which must often come up in our lives and work, and of which we may learn much, from the Book of Acts and the life of St. Paul.

#### GUIDANCE.

I wrote of it in my book "A Blue Distance" (page 126), but I want to write of it again and more fully. For there is a peril about leadings and guidance, and

some people have got thereby into a dangerous kind of fanaticism. For they have put their "leadings" above the laws of right and wrong (which are eternal), and above the Scriptural commands, and above the great principles of common sense. For instance, I cannot say whether that good and holy man, Evan Roberts, is wrong about his voices and his leadings. He is an exceptional man, called by GOD to do a special work, and I really do not know if he is sometimes mistaken. If so, I have no doubt that even his mistakes will lead to grace and blessings of humility. But I should be anxious if any of our officers were to take to imitating him in every respect. It is a good thing to be led by GOD, but I have never known an officer claim that he has been "led" to take what was a wilful course without its turning out to be wrong.

- The Bible is so perfectly balanced that it is specially worth while to see from it how GOD'S people were directed in their lives.

In the great majority of instances they seem to have been directed by the ordinary ways that good, humble, sensible people are directed. They were consecrated to GOD, they lived prayerful lives, and it was generally plain to them that there was an obvious right way, and a sensible thing to do. But there were exceptions—Paul was converted by a vision of JESUS CHRIST, and shortly afterwards Ananias had a vision and a real conversation with CHRIST, who answered his difficulty, and sent him to comfort Paul, and to cure his blindness by the laying on of hands.

I think you will find it very useful to study in the book of Acts the different ways in which the Apostles and Disciples were guided. Apparently they generally acted from what would be called simple, common-sense motives, and journeyed and spoke accordingly. Of course they prayed to have the right guidance, and to be influenced by the Holy Ghost. Thus we read "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," and "It pleased the Apostles and the whole Church to send delegates." Then we hear that "as they ministered," the Holy Ghost said "Separate me Paul and Barnabas."

One of the providences from which they frequently received guidance was opposition. It drove them to new fields of work—from Antioch, from Iconium, from Lystra, and Derbe, from Thessalonica, Berea, and Ephesus. On one occasion we are told that they were "forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia," and again that "the Spirit suffered them not" to go to Bythinia. Another time a vision appeared of a man from Macedonia, inviting them thither, and they "gathered assuredly" that they were to go, and were not shaken in their belief, even though it was followed by cruel treatment at Philippi.

Then we hear that Paul's "spirit was stirred" at Athens, and that he followed its leading. Again he was "pressed in the spirit" at Corinth. On another occasion, the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas made them go two different ways. At one time they received guidance from the words of Peter and others

at a Conference, and sometimes they had dreams. It must be remembered that these were the days before railways and telegraphs, and newspapers, so that if they had not had supernatural intimations many things would have been left undone altogether, from want of knowledge of what the different needs for them were.

On another occasion we hear that Paul "purposed in the spirit" to go to Jerusalem and Rome. He was "bound in the spirit" for Jerusalem, though he expected bonds and afflictions there. At this time the disciples whom he met at Tyre said to him "through the Spirit" that he should not go to Jerusalem, and just afterwards Agabus bound his hands and feet with Paul's girdle and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, 'So shall the Jews bind the man who owns this girdle.'" These brethren evidently had knowledge through the Holy Spirit of what was to happen, but Paul did not attend to their advice, and when he would not be persuaded the brethren said "The will of GOD be done."

It looks therefore as if a supernatural intimation of what was going to happen would not necessarily keep St. Paul from doing what he himself had gathered from GOD was the right thing. I daresay you remember how in the Old Testament a young prophet got his commands straight from GOD, and disobeyed them because an old prophet said *he* had had a vision giving different directions. The young man ought to have obeyed GOD'S voice to him direct, and in con-

sequence of his disobedience he was slain by a lion.

The above are some instances of the way in which the Apostles were guided. We Church Army people are generally guided by the rules of the Society to which we belong, for it is clear that while we belong to the Church Army, GOD would have us loyally to keep its rules. It is never right to do wrong.

Towards the end of the Acts we find that Paul was directed through his young nephew, who had discovered a plot to destroy him. Paul acted on his information, and frustrated the plot. During his voyage to Rome he told those in authority that the voyage would mean distress, but that there had stood by him the night before, the Angel of GOD. Whose he was and Whom he served, and Who had cheered him and led him with His counsel.

All these instances are worth studying and remembering for our own use. If we live in communion with GOD, with prayers and thanksgivings, He will certainly give us all needful guidance, though sometimes we may not *feel* as clear about it as we should like to feel. Yesterday I lost my way on the mountains (I am writing in Italy) and I got wrong, and had to ask first two children, and then an old woman to direct me to Varallo. We could not understand a word of what each other said, and they led me just in the way that I *felt* almost sure was wrong and different to the way I had found some years ago. But I had found out my own incapacity for getting home, and there was nothing for me to do but to trust to these

guides. So I did as they told me, and got safely back after many qualms and doubts. "Which things are an allegory!" Perhaps our guidance in more important matters comes sometimes in the same dubious way from GOD.

In running the race that is set before you I advise you to avoid *distractions* as much as you can. I say this from experience. Keep the single eye, and the heart which says, as St. Paul said, "*One thing I do.*" There are many things which cannot be called exactly wrong, but which bring worries with them—worries about money, and reputation, and friends, and acquaintances.

For instance, the time comes when most of us fall in love. I believe it is right to do this *when the time comes*, but how often have I known Christian workers do it a great deal too soon, and how often have I seen their work suffer in consequence. One of my greatest friends told me, thirty years ago, that he had had no idea what it would mean for him to be engaged to be married. He was a successful evangelist, and he became attached to an earnest Christian girl, who has made him an excellent wife. Probably he took the step at the right time, with GOD'S full blessing on it. He was nearly thirty, he could support a wife and family, and everyone approved, but none the less did he feel the experience to be startling, for the thought of her naturally obtruded everywhere, and made him restless when he was away from her. He felt that his preaching became more of a routine. He felt he had

two objects—winning souls and courting the lady, and he was perplexed as to what he ought to do. Let us be extra careful that we do not allow ourselves to take such a step till GOD'S time for it has come.

Family anxieties often have the same distracting effect, and this is why some men do what I feel to be a mistake—take vows of celibacy. I do not mean that it is wrong to engage not to marry *for a certain time*, but to take anything like a life long vow is, I think, tempting Providence, and often brings deplorable results.

Even religious reading may, if done out of proportion, be a distraction from the work which GOD has given us to do. Some men have an ambition to take Holy Orders, and they are tempted to give the time and strength, which belong to the Society which employs them, to study. Their heart is no longer only in the work of evangelising. A new ambition has come in and distracted their heart.

Light reading and other amusements are distractions to many people when taken out of moderation, and not for needful recreation. There is, as the Pilgrim's Progress says, a ditch on one side, and a quag on the other, and I do not want to ignore the danger to a few people of becoming cut off from human sympathy and kindness, and turning into proud ascetics with withered hearts. Let us, if possible, be sensible and humble in this matter. Try to be "good," rather than to be "better than others." There is a great difference between the two. This is Martin Luther's advice.



I am staying at Varallo for my holiday. It is an Italian Town lying among lofty hills with Monte Rosa not far off. A foaming river of the clearest water rushes through the valley among great rocks and flowery meadows. The air is pure and keen, and my thoughts turn naturally to you, my comrades of the Church Army.

The chief sight of Varallo is its "Sacred Mountain," a high hill with a paved road winding up and round it, and leading to the summit where there are about sixty chapels or grottoes which contain representations of our LORD'S life and Passion exhibited in life-size coloured figures. The people of Varallo have always seemed to me particularly good and simple. Boys and girls as well as men and women go into the Churches and kneel and pray there even on week-days and at all sorts of hours. They work hard and are very poor, but I feel that the Sacred Mountain does its work in their hearts, and keeps them in mind of the holy life and suffering death of our LORD. One sees them often walking up it and praying. I wish we had a show like it in London.

For as we look at CHRIST, and speak of Him, and to Him, and listen to His voice, we slowly get changed into His likeness.

But how slow is our progress! Most of us need a great awakening before we even learn how *selfish* we are. Mr. Coate told us (at our May Conference) a striking story of a rich lady finding herself in heaven (in a dream) and noticing that houses were being built in all directions.

"What a beautiful mansion this is," said she, "Who can it be for? What noble rooms and galleries, and what treasures everywhere!"

"It is for your gardener" said the builders—"Oh but that is surely absurd" said the lady, "He has lived all his life in a cottage, and a *poorer* cottage even than he need have lived in for he has always been so improvident in giving everything away. And what nice buildings for the poor, these are! They remind me of those I have just been building on my estate. Now that cottage over there with one room would just suit my gardener. Who is *that* for?" "That is for you," said the builders.

"*For me!* There must be some strange mistake. I cannot live in a *cottage*, I am accustomed to live in a palace."

"We are very sorry," said the builders, "But *it is the best we can do with the materials which you have sent up to us.*"

Ah! what materials are we sending up for our mansions above? Have we stubble or have we gold for our treasure in heaven? I think the people who will have the best palaces there are the people who are so unselfish that they never think of having grand mansions in heaven or anywhere else. And if they got them they would like to live in the scullery, and give all the best rooms to needy ones! I cannot fancy our dear Bishop of London, or Mr. Carlile, or some of the holy women on our staff, or some of our officers (men and women) enjoying such things even in heaven if

there were hungry shivering people outside. They have a trick of unselfishness which will never leave them till CHRIST has seen of the travail of His soul and been satisfied. And then God will be all in all ! May His Spirit search us and show us if we are selfish—selfish even in our religion perhaps.

In the scene of the Sacred Mountain here no face haunts me like the face of Caiaphas. Yet he looks like a great many people that we know. Just a selfish handsome worldling. CHRIST stands mute, suffering, and sorrowful before him. And Caiaphas shows his even teeth in a contemptuous smile. His eyebrows are raised with indifference and incredulity. He has done well for himself, and won a "good position" in the world. CHRIST is nothing to him, and he is nothing to CHRIST but a scornful hostile critic. He is the incarnation of worldly prosperous selfishness.

- He makes me detest selfishness, but he makes me tremble for the same fault in myself. Sometimes little things reveal our selfishness to us in a very unpleasant light. For instance, how strangely selfish even good people are in travelling.

I will tell you a story to illustrate what I mean (partly real and partly made up and adapted). Between Boulogne and Milan there travelled with me in a corner of the railway carriage a middle-aged woman whom at first I thought was a poor gentlewoman but who turned out to be a respectable lady's maid whose mistress was travelling in a first class carriage not far off us. I think she was rather accustomed to be

neglected and she was very uncomplaining, but when she got in at Boulogne she looked so exhausted and ill that a kind looking gentleman gave up his comfortable corner place in the crowded carriage to her, and though he was evidently very fond of air he shut all the windows to please her. She said she had a cold and was afraid of draughts. So we all spent a very stuffy night. In the early dawn we woke up in the usual dishevelled state of all-night travellers, and bowls of coffee and milk with rolls were a welcome sight on the platform of the first station we stopped at. The kind man (Mr. Felix) was quite anxious to get some for poor Miss Price, but she was very scrupulous about giving him trouble and she said that she had been very sick on board the steamer and did not want any food, and that her mistress, Lady Nottingham (of course I am inventing the names and some of the details), would be sure to think of her and send her breakfast. But Mr. Felix would not be put off, and he soon found out that she had no foreign money with her, so he insisted on getting her a hot cup of coffee and a roll, and paying for it. And it was good to see how she revived, and how her tongue was loosed and spirit cheered. Before long she began to boast in a mild way of her mistress and her mistress's friends and relations. She could only speak English and she had been forbidden to leave her seat for fear of getting lost. I felt that Mr. Felix had spent his franc well and I should think it would add a turret to his mansion in heaven! He was a truly good man and presently he

lent Miss Price a *Parish Magazine* with a very nice article in it which he had himself written. She accepted it gratefully (for his spending the franc had won her heart completely), and I thought she would have read the article, but she only looked on it as a keepsake and put it carefully in her bag. She said she was fond of reading but that she had not much time for it, and that she was fond of scenery, but I noticed that she only half turned her head for a moment when Mr. Felix exclaimed that the Alps were in sight and glittered like a rose-coloured vision. The songs of the nightingales loud and liquid pierced the morning air and could be heard in spite of all the noise of the train.

At about half past ten there came along the corridor in much state a grand and charming lady whom we t once felt to be Lady Nottingham. There are some women who seem always to be accompanied by pomp like the leading lady in a picture by the great Paul Veronese. Usually they are surrounded by attendants and symbols of splendour, but Lady Nottingham, even though she was alone, had the most gracious of manners, and one felt as if she might almost be the Queen of Sheba with servants behind her carrying ivory, apes, and peacocks to King Solomon. In a kind endearing voice she reproached her maid for not having had a proper breakfast as it appeared that she herself had wisely done. "Have I not often told you Hannah always to have a little more money than you need?" e said. Hannah told her how good Mr. Felix had

been about the coffee. "And the gentleman has given me this book that he has written himself," she continued, showing it. "Indeed I shall read it with the greatest pleasure," said Lady Nottingham appropriating the book, and bestowing on Mr. Felix a cordial smile.

"You are very kind," said Mr. Felix, blushing, for what author can be unmoved at appreciation of what he has written? And I am sure he thought that she would actually read it.

"But you are stifled here," said Lady Nottingham suddenly. "Hannah, have the goodness to open the windows. and you must let me sit down here with you all (though I am always rather afraid of catching diseases in second class carriages). Ah! that is much better, now I will have that cushion and I will put my feet on your basket if I may. That is delightful. But don't let me disturb you at your breakfast, sir, for I am sure you have got something excellent in that jar which you had just opened, and I shall be very unhappy if you let me hinder your meal." "It is cold curry," said Mr. Felix, "I always take it with me when I go on a long journey."

"Curry! but what a good idea," said the lady. "I wish I had brought some curry, for I am famishing."

"But do have some of this," said Mr. Felix, "for it is a great deal more than I shall want."

"Oh, but indeed I couldn't *touch* it, for I don't believe you have got any more than you will want . . Or if I do, it must be the least little bit . . . Why, it

is delicious, I never tasted anything so good. I was feeling quite faint when I came in; but I little thought that I was coming to such a charming picnic . . . But how greedy I am, eating up all your breakfast like this? I have scarcely left you *any*; but you would make me take it, and now I am going to give you a tiny piece of advice: You have put that heavy bag in the rack just over your head, and if there were a jolt it might easily come down and hurt you dreadfully, and perhaps me, too. You should never put a heavy valise over the place where you are yourself going to sit, and it is not very safe to put it *opposite* you if no one is sitting in the place below it, for a movement of the train might throw it from the seat on to your feet." But I am taking up too much space in making you laugh at my travelling story, though it will not be wasted if we become more thoughtful and more unselfish by considering the ways of Mr. Felix and his companions. And let us learn the habit of being unselfish and CHRIST-like in little things. For there are so many *little* things in life that in their multitude they are perhaps more important than big things. And if we practice doing little things well we shall be much more likely to surmount the big ones when they come in our way.

I do not, however, mean that GOD does not intend us to rejoice in the good things that He, day by day, sends us in this earthly life. That is not selfishness. Indeed, it would be very ungrateful if we did not thankfully accept them, and truly enjoy them. Those

of us who are parents know how hurt and distressed parents feel if their children are indifferent about all the pleasant and useful things they have carefully provided for them.

But, all the same, we are told not to *set our hearts too much* on what has its end in this life, but to spend our greatest affection on our treasure in Heaven—on the things that cannot pass away.

It is from and through earthly things that heavenly treasure is produced, and no doubt there have been good people who despised many gifts of GOD which He meant that they should have thankfully enjoyed in their due time. We are told (in Ecclesiastes iii. 11) that GOD has "made everything beautiful in its time." And it is comforting to recognise and understand this, and to enjoy His gifts, and to help others to enjoy them, too. Truly He has done all things well, and is perfect in wisdom, love, and power. Let us have our treasure in Heaven, but let us learn something of GOD'S love through what He shows us and gives us here.

Do you not like to review your past life in the light of GOD? How beautiful childhood was while it lasted! Then came youth, and some of us have passed on to maturity, to the Autumn of Life, and perhaps to the winter. Are not all good, and, in a way, better and better? We think gratefully and affectionately of the playthings of our childhood, when a toy, a bun, or a birthday feast meant so much to us. They were good in their time. We had the tears and smiles that



belonged to childhood. If we are wise we do not want these things back again, but we thank GOD that we had them once, and that others have them now.

Then came the keener energies of youth, with loves, and fears, and hopes, and ambitions. Where are they a few years later? Some of them are fulfilled, and some of them are faded and dead, and we do not even regret them. They were good in their time, like all things that come in the order of GOD. We must not despise them, or hold them cheap, though we have no more to do with them now, than with the games of children. Let boys and young men rejoice in their strength, and in manly exercises. The longer they keep up with them the better, I suppose, but sooner or later they come to an end, and other things come in their place. It is scarcely wrong to half regret youth, and I, for my part, think that melancholy itself is a beautiful gift of GOD, and goes well with joy and tenderness. The delight in poetry would be nearly all gone if there were no sadness to give pungency to it.

There are some things which we may confidently hope will take their departure with youth. Conceit is one of them. It is almost excusable in young people who are discovering their strong points, and who want other people to discover them too; but it is an ugly quality if it last on to maturity. How tiresome are middle-aged bores who keep telling us how valuable they are. They never do it if they are *very* valuable.

To everything there is a time. No one likes to see youth simulated by maturity and age. Let us seem

what we are. If we are 40, 50, 60, or 70, let us look accordingly if we can. (For some people it is, alas! necessary to look as young as possible in order to get their livelihood. So we must not blame *them* for trying to seem younger than they are, as their daily bread depends on it.) We *like* oldish people to be kindly, and rather grave, and yet to be so full of sympathy that they are able to be glad and to laugh, and to rejoice in the mirth and happiness of others. It means a great deal to keep the heart wide open. Some people become better, even physically, as they get older. Some of the most beautiful persons I know are old, or getting old, and generally they do not know how attractive they are, and are half surprised to find how much people love and admire them. • It is sad when people make a sort of nightmare of the old age which is inevitably before them. There is a time to seek, and a time to lose, a time to get, and a time to cast away.

We cannot keep good gifts beyond their appointed time. They are like the manna, sweet, and good for a day, but they breed worms if they are kept too long. Youth and beauty, and work, and life itself pass away. Is this sad? No, it is not really sad, or only *rightly* sad. All that GOD orders is good. We are His offspring. In Him we live and move and have our being. He is our Home and He lasts on for ever. And He knows best.

And now, once more, farewell, dear Comrades.

The list of your names is before me as I write.

GOD knows what each single one of us is needing. May He strengthen those that stand, comfort and help the weak-hearted, raise up them that fall, and, finally, beat down Satan under our feet. May His blood be cleansing us each moment, and His Holy Spirit inspiring us.

E.C.



November, 1905.

DEAR COMRADES,

Thank you again warmly for your answers to the September letter. I do not know that I have ever received replies that have pleased me so much.

May we all be full of joy and service—getting humbler, kinder, and more faithful as we get older.

I want this time to talk to you about Sin.

Let us look at it fairly, and let us say nothing about it that we do not honestly believe to be true.

There has been a great deal said and written *cheaply* about it, which, though well meant, is not convincing because it is not quite true.

God allowed it to come into the world, though He judges, and condemns, and punishes it. Christ died to save us from it. And our work is to abjure and overcome it by His grace and His strength.

God's severity is very different from man's severity.

There are some people (who feel sure that their sins are forgiven and that therefore they will not be punished), who are apt to be unnaturally severe on other sinners. And some there are too who hold doctrines which they may be sometimes rather ashamed of about God and His treatment of the guilty and who therefore think it necessary to be extra hard on everybody. Of course no one contradicts them when they condemn *sin*. But there is a great differ-

ence between condemning sin and condemning sinners. We are told that God sent His Son not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

I think it will be found that straightforward and unexaggerated dealing with the matter is more convincing and more deterrent than imaginative views. Truth proves itself strong and triumphant at last, however angrily it may be at first withstood.

All of us are born sinful. David puts this fact forward as a kind of claim for mercy. Even in his unparalleled 51st Psalm he pleads that his mother had conceived him in sin. And this claim stands for all humanity. Though we are guilty we are to be pitied. I heard of a worker calling on a dying man, and asking him "Where is your trust placed." "I am trusting in the mercy of God," was the reply. "Ah, that is a broken reed to trust in," said the other, and proceeded to enlighten him as best he could. We all feel that such an answer was wrong though the speaker "meant well."

For some reason (and it must have been a good reason), sin was allowed in the world. It is doubtless a mystery, but not a quite impenetrable mystery to those who know that most of the greatest virtues which God and we love are produced by conflict either with evil or trouble or pain. So that these virtues could not have existed if all had always been perfect. At any rate sin is *here*, and we find that our Saviour, Who took "away the sin of the world" often looked

with love and pity on great sinners, and was ever ready to forgive, to cleanse, and to deliver.

Those whom He dealt sternly with were always the proud, the self-complacent, the neglectful, the unjust, the hypocritical and the unforgiving—those whom we may call the *unbroken* sinners.

In this respect most people are very little like Him. They would court the acquaintance of the agreeable Dives, and gladly visit him, and give him credit for bestowing his leavings on Lazarus. But it is a question, whether, after investigating Lazarus's case, they would not consider him an "undeserving object."

Let us try to weigh sin as Christ weighed it, and as He weighs it to-day.

In the Church Army we are continually dealing with those who have fallen into drink and other vices, and I think most of us feel no difficulty in being kind to such people, and hopeful about them. Though when they try our patience by ingratitude and deceit, they are hard to bear with. And when their sins involve wives, husbands, children and others in wretchedness, we feel obliged to be at times stern, as well as kind.

Not to forgive a sin that is admitted and repented of is downright wicked and hellish, but to condone sin is equally dangerous, though not equally ugly. We have, however, a different judgment for those who have risen to a religious standing and who yet offend by selfishness, coldness, indifference, and self-complacency. We are more outraged by a fine preacher

who is harsh and unhumble, than by a wretched drunkard or fallen woman. The faults of the good are more detestable than the faults of the bad.

And therefore, comrades, it behoves us, who rank (by our very work and profession) among "the good" to be extra watchful of ourselves. Some people are so afraid of the danger of false profession that they prefer to count among outsiders rather than be judged by the judgment which is reserved for those who are reckoned as "good."

Many a true Christian is tortured by the sense of an indwelling sin which he knows has no business in his heart.

There are some good people who claim that they are entirely free from indwelling sin, but I have never known one of these who was a quitesatisfactory person. So I presume that they are mistaken. It may be possible to be sinless, but we have the highest authority for knowing that it is impossible to be sinless, *and to say so*.

Sin is very deceitful, and has often strange developments. I daresay you have noticed that women who have fallen into evil ways are sometimes bent on believing the worst of other women, so as to drag them down to their own level, and to make their own wickedness less marked. It is a horrible practice. There is always ground for suspicion that people who accuse others unnecessarily are themselves guilty of the very same evil. This applies, of course, to both men and women, but though men are perhaps less good generally than women, yet there are temptations which

attack women more than men. They are more unselfish, but they have specially to be on their guard against little jealousies and quarrelsomeness.

The sins that sound the worst are often less damaging than those which may be called almost respectable.

Sin ever works for our ruin. Apart from its guilt and horror, it is wasteful, weakening and paralysing. Even when it is past it keeps damaging us by spoiling our times of service and communion. Consider, for instance, the sin of temper—born of selfishness, jealousy, or envy. The soul is tempted and falls into it. The bitter words are spoken, the wounds are inflicted, and immediately the soul of the sinner is defiled. Then come repentance and sorrow, and the putting away of evil. But is the mischief over? No. Time must be spent in repairing, or trying to repair the evil done—time which belonged by right to happy service for our Master, to communion, and to progress in the heavenly race. Alas! alas! while the warriors repair their armour they are debarred from either fighting or working. The watchful enemy has his chance, and he uses it. While the careless virgins went to buy oil they lost their opportunity of welcoming the bridegroom.

Where are the main evils of sin? What is our chief fear and dread about it?

For one thing God, Who is infinitely good, abhors it. Christ so hated it that He suffered death and agony to take it away and to deliver us from its guilt and power.



But there is another fact about it which perhaps comes even nearer to us, and it is this—

Our sin makes us *corrupt and hideous*. It is so nearly a part of ourselves that it is a misery and a shame. It is dreadful to carry it about with us, and—though it may be forgiven—we dread to meet death and enter into the next world defaced or deformed, or, *as Christ says, maimed* by it.

To be forgiven and saved is one thing, to be perfected is (as St. Paul tells us) quite a different matter. "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged of the Lord."

But it is not only a question of the *next* world.

Sin cripples us daily *here*. It makes us sad when we ought to be glad, and weak when we ought to be strong.

Who has not felt this?

- Who has not felt his words fall flat, and known that *a fault in his own life*, of omission or commission, was the cause. Can we expect our words to conquer if in spite of our convictions we ourselves have failed? "Your words terrify me, but your life reassures me," said a courtier to the preacher Massillon. It was a terrible accusation! Perhaps we have heard a street vendor of medicines advertising loudly in the street some remedy for a cough, and then breaking out himself into coughing. Who would buy his lozenges?

How is our sin to be dealt with?

To *know* it and to *confess* it is a good beginning. I think it is almost half the battle, for many of us are quite unconscious of our faults.

I remember a very good lady telling us at a meeting that (some years before) she had been at a conference, where there had come down a wonderful power for telling each other of besetting sins without any offence being given. She said, "A friend came to me and said, 'Mrs. G., I am going to tell you of a fault. You have a way (in your speaking and in your conversation) of always bringing it round to yourself and in a sort of way to your own credit.' 'Oh no,' I said, 'I think you must be mistaken. Surely that *cannot* be a fault of mine.' But I found that it *was*, and I should never have discovered it but for my friend's faithful admonition." Curious to say, the same fault still remained prominent after some years had passed. But whether she was conscious of it or not I never knew. We none of us liked to tell her of it, and for all I know she may still be perpetually talking about herself, without any idea that she is doing so.

It shows how curiously deep-rooted in us our faults sometimes are, and how little we may recognise them.

But at any rate confessing them is a very great help towards getting rid of them. It defines them, and it clears the air, even though it does not eradicate them.

When I was a very young man I remember confessing my sin to a good and holy man, and it was a great help in fighting against it, though I cannot by any means say that I always got the victory. But confession generally means repentance, and advice is nearly always good, and scarcely ever bad. I need hardly say that in order to be good and useful, a confession must be complete and sincere.

I have read of a Russian lady who had committed the most horrible crimes, which she would not and dared not confess, and yet she was superstitious enough to believe that the priest's absolution cleansed people from everything, and she would say to him, "I accuse myself of having lost my temper with my maid this morning," hoping that he would use the words, "I absolve you from this sin and from any others you may have committed." But the priest knew her well enough not to do it. This was incomplete confession.

I have also heard of a gentleman who was teased and angry because a good clergyman spoke severely to him about the duty of confessing his sins. And he said, "Well, I know I *do* sin sometimes. Indeed I sinned in Church this morning from the fear of man. I confess it. You were going to preach and I knew that if I stayed and listened I should be wasting time which might be better employed. And yet from cowardice and from fear of what might be said, I did not like to rise and quietly walk out, but I sat on and listened all through, though I knew it was wrong." This was ironical confession. Of course I know well that no Church Army person would talk like this.

How then are we to go to work further to cure ourselves of our faults?

Let us remember that great triumphs are not generally secured by only *one* means—either in ourselves or in the world at large. Many methods and *many* helpers are needed—one after another. None of them must be despised or disregarded.

Time and development are required as well as confession, repentance, and effort. And all mean the grace of GOD. If everybody told the exact truth, we should find that there is no one panacea for abiding victory. Not sacraments, or faith, or a conference, or Christian work. It is a long fight from day to day and from year to year, with hopes and fears and victories and disappointments and joy and sorrow, and many deceitful wiles of Satan and of our own hearts. But in the end GOD will conquer for us and in us, and "though we have been among the pots yet we shall be as doves that have wings like silver and gold."

"We have need of patience," and if our experience makes us humble and kind, we have a good deal to be thankful for.

Alas! people do not always get better as they get older. I have known ambition make an ugly and vigorous shoot in quite middle age, when during youth it had been kept fairly in abeyance. Prosperity had come, and with it the desire to be powerful. And this desire meant neglecting and holding cheap old and tried friends and seeking after those who were advantageous and honoured by the world. Everyone saw it except the offender, who, however, rose higher and higher in public estimation and sank lower and lower as to devotion and true beauty of character.

"How excellent, how important, how virtuous!" said one set of people. But the real friends thought "No, No! How blunted, how retrograde, how ugly! And how self-complacent!"

Ambition and love of power are subtle sins, for they may easily clothe themselves under the semblance of benevolence and the desire to bless the world. Many ambitious people have done a great deal of good, and, of course, it is only *selfish* ambition that is wrong, the desire to gain honour and position for ourselves rather than for the sake of GOD'S Kingdom. The bad kind can be known by its ugliness. And it cannot always be spared even if it is faulty. For great effective people who are quite humble and free from worldly ambition are rare. There are plenty who are so lazy and self-indulgent that they practically amount to nothing.

May we officers of the Church Army keep rising and getting the best kind of power and yet grow all the time in humility and unselfishness. It is possible, but it is not easy.

- Quiet unhurried prayer is a necessity, if we are to truly advance.

May we keep the pure eyes which mean *seeing God*.

Let us daily take for our morning motto, those two beautiful words in the sixtieth of Isaiah,

"Arise, shine."

I know people who always seem to carry with them a beautiful happy life-giving atmosphere. You can almost see it shining, and all who come near them are blessed. They are the people who have learnt to love, and to give, and they do both without any effort. All my life I have been wishing that I could love better. It is comparatively easy to be kind, and to admire and

reverence. But how few people have the faculty of letting their heart go forth with sweet purity to the men and women and children about them. So it was that CHRIST'S heart went out towards the rich and disappointing young man, and to the delightful centurion. And to St. John, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, and to many others. To the dying thief, I think.

I remember a wise person saying "My idea of Heaven would be for everyone to be what we call "in love" with every one else, and yet for there to be no danger of their being either foolish or sinful, or of any trouble coming of it."

We must be content with much less than this. If we are consistently kind and unselfish we shall some day attain to the fervent love from a pure heart which turns earth into heaven. and which lasts and grows instead of quickly fading into cold indifference like the love of the senses which burns fiercely for a short time and then dies out.

We have lately received more than the average number of letters from Clergy praising the work done by the Captains and Nurses. One writes:—"I have nothing but good to report, Nurse C. is excellent in every way. She is always faithful in her work, pleasant in her manner, consistent in her life, a general favourite with all, both young and old. We are grateful to Headquarters for sending her."

And now farewell.

Pray for us and for one another, and give thanks too. Grow in faith and in the knowledge and love of God.

E.C.



July, 1904.

DEAR COMRADES,

I want in this July letter to take two subjects.

First, I want to talk to you a little about the use of trouble and of sadness. For some of you have, I know, had perplexing trials lately.

Secondly, about the all-important preaching of the Gospel, and of our special anxieties at present respecting it.

That pain and sorrow come from GOD we know. But it is wise to strengthen ourselves in this faith *while we are strong*, so that when trouble comes we may meet it unfalteringly as a friend, and not repel it as an enemy. Let us face it bravely, saying, "My Spirit does not fear you, though my flesh may turn somewhat faint. For my mind holds fast what I learnt about you in calm weather. *You are not an enemy*, and I will give thanks to GOD for you. He taught me this truth in quiet hours of insight, and now in times of darkness and trial I hold my lesson fast."

Those who have suffered and triumphed are worth more than they were worth before they suffered. They have been through the fire, and are therefore fit for higher service. They are refined and strengthened by what they have endured.

And having suffered, they know how to help sufferers.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity."



Those who are always healthy can be *kind* to the diseased. And the rich can *imagine and pity* the pains of the poor. In both cases they can give valuable aid. But how different in quality is the sympathy of those who have themselves learned the taste of sickness, or pain, or poverty !

I do not mean that there is not a great and useful value attaching to innocent, untried happiness. Joy is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and pleasure is akin to it. Let those who are thus endowed be glad, and thank GOD, and use their gifts freely to cheer and bless others. But let them not refuse, when the time comes, to yield themselves up for other gifts, which may mean death to much which they have loved.

I want to write to you of a not uncommon trial which I know that some of you patiently endure—*Depression*. How many there are—women especially, but men also—who daily bear the yoke of it. It is like a perpetual slight headache. It never quite leaves them, and yet they have learnt not to complain of it. They feel half ashamed of it, and as if it were almost a sin, and yet they know that at times it cannot altogether be helped, for that it is a physical matter. Their spirits are low. They have perhaps a tendency to fear the worst about everything, and to take a despondent view both of natural and spiritual experiences.

I am naturally a healthy and cheerful man, but I should be sorry if I did not know enough of sorrow to make me able to sympathise with those who are cast down, and who nobly fight against their depression.

They do not utter their thoughts, but they cannot prevent their rising in dreadful qualms. "Certainly my powers are less than they were. My knees fail me. I get so tired that I must slacken in my work. Are not my sight and hearing getting impaired? How many failures I can count up. How much better other people do! Surely my brain power is declining." Or, "How I have been neglected and passed over! It is doubtless my own fault, but I am very little valued. How ungratefully and disloyally I have been treated by my fellow-workers, and how cruelly I have been disliked and insulted by enemies. I feel like David when he said that the very Abjects came together and made mouths at him. *I must give up.* The time is coming for me to be shelved. Younger people must have their turn. I see it plainly. It will be, henceforth, a gradual going down hill for me till the end comes. But it is hard to be slighted by friends on whom I had so depended."

Such depressing thoughts are scarcely allowed, but they make themselves felt even if they are unspoken. They are *wrong* if they are allowed and given place to, for GOD orders all for us, and it is want of faith in Him to grumble. So they must be steadily fought and conquered.

Moreover, Satan the accuser is busy with his discouragements as to our spiritual declension. And there is often justice in his taunts.

Let me say here that depression in many cases needs a physical cure. A sensible carefulness to rest for

half-an-hour when we are getting over tired; wholesome food taken regularly so as to prevent exhaustion; and sometimes a dose of medicine, will often remedy it completely. At any rate, we must not give it standing room outwardly, even while it worries us. It is quite possible to be so convinced of the duty of cheerfulness that we shall be able to put on the appearance of it even if we feel sad below the surface.

But there very likely comes a moment when the poor soul nearly sinks beneath its burden.

And then, perhaps, there comes some strong, cheerful friend who scolds the poor sufferer. "It is wrong of you to be depressed. It is faithless, and it is selfish. Look on the bright side. Do not be self-centred. Look at me. Throw yourself into interests outside yourself. Remember your many blessings." It is kindly meant, and the sorrowful one tries to be

- grateful, and to take the good advice.

Not very successfully, perhaps! But, bye-and-by the cheerful friend is struck down with influenza, and begins presently to suffer from its occasional after-effect of *depression*. And the other sufferer—though of course sorry in a way—easily understands that the trial will be salutary; and somehow the society of the quondam, cheerful friend becomes much more welcome and agreeable than it was before. For now they both know by experience what depression means, and are learning how it is to be met, and how (perhaps) to help others without jarring them. They know that it is one thing to feel in low spirits and quite another

to be rebellious. The dark cloud comes down. The chilly wind pierces them through. The heart sinks and fails from within. There is distress. And yet the spirit need not fail if it knows that physical depression may be one of the "all things" for which it is possible to give thanks to the Father. It is somehow to be a means of grace while it lasts. And when it has departed it will be found to have left gifts behind which were attainable in no other way.

I do not mean that in one sense depression is not an enemy. We are to fight it just as we fight fever and small pox. But blessing comes through the fighting which cannot come without it. Therefore, face it as you face poverty and sickness, and give praise and thanks to GOD all the time.

And when the work of this veiled messenger—friend or foe—is done, and when, like a fever, or an ague, or an east wind, it has departed, oh what comfort and delight come into its place, and how heart and soul and mind all rejoice together!

That delightful saint, George Herbert, felt this when he wrote after his illness—

"And now in age I bud again,  
After so many deaths I live and write;  
I once more smell the dew and rain,  
And relish versing: O my only light,  
It cannot be  
That I am he  
On whom Thy tempests fell at night."

Those of you who are strong and vigorous will, I know, patiently bear with this counsel, written specially for those who are tired and sad.

And now I want your attention, your prayers, and your help about a matter which is specially occupying our minds at Headquarters.

As life goes on, our belief in conversion work grows stronger and stronger. For more and more the necessity and reality of it are proved. And, therefore, we are the more alarmed at the present lack of real evangelists. This is true of our Church and of Nonconformists. Thank GOD we have some in the C.A. But we want more. There are plenty of good, earnest men who can "edify," but comparatively few who even *try* to convert sinners. It was this fact which so bowed down the spirit of Archbishop Benson before he died, and which is now exercising the heart and mind of the Bishop of London.

Where are the men—lay or clerical—who can convert sinners? There are numbers who can take retreats, and who can speak earnestly of the duties and privileges of communicants. But do we not almost invariably hear it said of a Mission, that "It has been encouraging in stimulating regular Church goers, and that it is hoped that the after result may be that through them outsiders will be won?"

But are they won? And if not, what is the reason? I believe it is partly owing to the matter of the missionary, and partly to his manner.

What is usually his subject? "Let there be more earnestness, more devotional exercises, more self-denial, more loyalty to the Church, and deeper appreciation of the Sacraments."

In preaching this he feels at home with his subject, and his audience (consisting largely of women) approve heartily, and make leisure to come and hear him.

But *men* and outsiders are conspicuous by their absence, for they are not specially interested in ecclesiasticism, and the preaching is chiefly ecclesiastic and emotional. Sometimes it is eloquent ; and if the personality of the preacher is captivating, he generally gets a good audience. But it is not what St. Paul technically calls *the Gospel* which is preached. It is not "Behold the Lamb of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world." It is not "We are ambassadors beseeching you in Christ's Name to be reconciled to GOD." In fact, though one scarcely dares to say it even under one's breath, there are not a few of our clergy who, if a man came to them in anxiety of soul, would not be able to give him clear, convincing advice in answer to his question, "What must I do to be saved." Many men *could*, I know, deal with him clearly and powerfully ; but I know, also, that there are very many who could not.

Comrades in the Church Army, can we have a higher calling than evangelizing ? Is there a thing in life better worth our doing than declaring to the world that those who are careless, sinning, and burdened with sin may be forgiven, cleansed, and saved through Christ, that they may be at once reconciled to GOD, and become workers for Him. Once more let me say that it is *easy* to be forgiven, though it is difficult to become holy. One is quick work, the other is slow, and

generally accomplished through prolonged stages. To give this message of salvation by repentance and faith in Christ is our calling. Let us give it simply, clearly, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. And let us not give it in a preaching, sing-song manner.

I am now going to say a thing which will displease some people.

I do not think that Evangelists had better bring in baptism when they are preaching to *outside* people who need conversion. Nearly everyone whom we preach to has been baptised; but tens of thousands of baptised people are on the wrong road—careless, godless, selfish, dishonest, drunkards, thieves, fornicators, or evil-doers. Is it well to tell such people that as they have been baptised they are children of GOD, members of Christ, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven?

- I remember Canon Body saying, and saying with great power, "That tens of thousands of people who are children of GOD and members of Christ, are hastening along the road to hell, and are even in hell now." I myself should have hesitated to say this, but I felt, that if his view of baptism was correct, he had no other alternative, and that for practical purposes of preaching salvation and conversion, he and I were agreed.

In writing this I am referring to work among careless *outsiders*, who entirely neglect the means of grace. In speaking to inconsistent Churchgoers, Baptism and Confirmation may be used as very powerful levers for

conversion, for these people know enough to be open to the reproaches of conscience. But many of the rougher men and women seem to be completely lapsed. And, therefore, is it not a mistake to speak to them of their baptism having made them inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven?

Let us now consider the subject of the equipment of the Evangelist.

His first requisite is that he should be unquestionably saved himself, and should have a clear conception of *how* others are to be saved.

The second requisite is that he shall speak in the power of the Holy Ghost.

The third requisite is that his *manner* of preaching shall be powerful and convincing.

On each of these three points I have something to say.

One of the great enemies of the Gospel is cant; and we all know that the word "saved" may become cant in the mouth of certain people. For this reason many excellent and true Christians object to it. Their reply to the question, "Are you saved," would be "I hope I am *being* saved, and that I *shall* be saved at last."

I respect their scruples, but I submit that the word "saved" *is* a proper word to use. All words may be corrupted, but that is no reason why they should be discarded. Perhaps no word has been more desecrated than the word of words, "Jesus." Do we not all feel a shock when the holiest of names is used lightly,



even in religious talk? There is a miraculous power in it which gives it a preciousness that our instinct tells us to fear and guard from too common use. This is a mystery. Most reverent people feel that they can use the holy name of Christ when they would shrink from pronouncing the word "Jesus." How strange the hidden power of words is, for good, and alas! for evil. How wicked we know some words to be! How we avoid reading them, or hearing them!

But we cannot afford the disuse of the word "saved" or to substitute a weaker word for it. *Christ has saved the world.* This we are told as plainly as possible, and believers in Him are saved for the present, however far they may be from perfection, and from a state of final salvation. They have certainly not got beyond the danger of being "cast-aways."

We had better not try to be wiser than St. Paul, who in writing, even to the faulty Corinthians, speaks to them of the Gospel "by which ye *are also saved.*" Not "by which ye *will be saved.*" And again to the Ephesians, "by grace *have ye been saved.*" But the fact is so clear all through the Bible that true Christians are saved now, however imperfect and likely to fall they may be, that it cannot really be doubted or argued about.

The danger lies in our crudely and vainly daring to divide all the people we know into two classes, the saved and unsaved. If we attempt to do this we shall find ourselves not only in difficulties and errors, but

probably in actual sin. Do not let us dare to judge others in this way. Let them judge themselves.

Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

I do not mean that we are not to consider most prayerfully what the *probable* needs and dangers of people are. That is business.

I sometimes try to classify people, and I think it is a profitable thing to do, for their sakes and for our own.

I know about twelve holy saints.

I know about eight people who are very wicked.

I know a number of excellent, useful, spiritually-minded, Christian people.

I know about a dozen earnest, good Christian persons who are apt to be foolish and ridiculous, and who are almost always spoken of with a meaning smile. (Such people are, I notice, invariably self-complacent, otherwise they would not be ridiculous.)

I know many delightful, good, kind people, who certainly have something Divine in them, and yet who shrink from standing apart as followers of Christ, and who therefore lose a great deal, and are subject to dangerous entanglements. I long for these to throw their timidity to the winds, to overcome their scruples and avow themselves downright Christians.

I know hundreds of third and fourth rate Christians who are, I believe, saved, and who will "scrape through" because they are forgiven for Christ's sake, but who have much to be done in them before they attain to that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord."

I know happy young believers, about whom we have infinite hopes.

I know fading, elderly people who are disappointed and sad about themselves, but whose Father watches over them with love and patience.

And I know multitudes of people who are apparently living only for this world, with its gains and pleasures; many of them indifferent about GOD and about eternity, and only awake to earthly things. What can we say of such?

They are in the harvest field, and we are called to win them for GOD. Our message to them is "Repent, and be converted, everyone of you. Confess your sin, and put it away, by GOD'S grace. GOD your Father made you, and loves you as His offspring. The Son of GOD died for you when He bore the sin of the world. For your sins He died. Believe us, you are on the way to destruction, and it is from that fate that we try at all costs to save you. Christ is here. His Spirit witnesses now to you of Him. Believe and be saved. It is easy to be saved; it can be accomplished now. It takes time to become holy, but now is the hour to repent, to believe, and to be forgiven."

GOD grant that we may give this message earnestly, clearly, and with humility.

And now as to the second requisite of the Evangelist, that he shall preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us recognise this need, and let us also recognise that it can freely be supplied. The Holy Ghost was GOD'S gift at Pentecost. He is here with us now;

He is ready to fulfil His office. Our part is to pray for His power, and to believe that it is available. Let us give thanks for it, and let us be careful never to quench it. Each day this must be our care. Impurity and dissension are, I think, the greatest enemies to His work through us. If we quarrel, or are envious, or jealous, the Spirit's power sinks to zero. If the parasite sensuality, with its vampire qualities, is allowed in us, then the holy light fades till there is scarcely a glimmer.

Apparently the gift of the Holy Ghost power is very unequally displayed even in true Evangelists, but of this, who can accurately judge? "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth," and we cannot measure it. Sometimes Evangelists are but windbags, even when they seem to produce great effects. Sometimes the still small voice wins a great victory almost without observation. GOD knows.

As to the Evangelist's third requisite, I want to speak at some length. "Why is it," said a preacher to a great actor, "that you move multitudes to tears, though you are only dealing with fiction, while we preachers, who deal with realities, scarcely move people at all?" The actor's reply was: "It is because I treat fiction as if it were real, and you, in your *manner and speech*, treat realities as if they were fiction." How much truth there was in this criticism! Is it not true that oftentimes preachers give their tremendous message with such coolness that it is hard to think that they believe it? Are they actually

convinced that a great part of their audience is going to destruction in only a few years unless repentance and faith in Christ save them? Do they really believe that Christ may now be received as Saviour? Do they speak, and do they live as if they believed it?

I have been much impressed lately in reading records left to us of the earnestness of great Evangelists of the past.

I find in studying the times fifty years ago, that the same shortcomings were lamented then that we lament now—the great lack of powerful Evangelists, both among the clergy and the laity. There were then, as now, plenty of people who could “edify,” but very few who had power to convert sinners. Then, as now, there were numbers of correct sermons, but few powerful appeals to *outsiders*. How often we have written even to our own C.A. officers and begged them not to be betrayed into becoming merely respectable lay-workers? Among us, thank GOD, we *have* men who carry upon them the fire of GOD, and who use it for the conviction and conversion of sinners. To them applies the unparalleled verse describing true Evangelists. (GOD grant it may be true of us.) “Now, then, we are *ambassadors for Christ* as though GOD did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to GOD.”

It has been well said that “No ministry will be really effective, whatever may be its intelligence, which is not a ministry of strong faith, true humility, and deep earnestness. Would that this sentence

could be inscribed in all our habitations, over every platform, and over every Evangelist's writing table." Much modification and much growth will be manifest in gospel preaching as the centuries advance, but these three characteristics of GOD'S true messengers can never change any more than the main message they give.

In GOD'S work there is never stagnation, but advance; and it is well to observe what *kind* of advance takes place, and the dangers that attend it. Three developments strike us as to the gospel message.

First, the most successful Evangelists of the day are marked by an increasing *pity* for humanity, and they have more *respect* for their listeners even if they are outsiders. GOD'S perpetual love and care for *all* men are more recognised. No one is treated now as if hitherto he had been ignored and neglected by GOD, and had had no cause to give Him thanks.

The difference in the present attitude of the soul-winner towards sinners becomes very apparent when we read again some of the dear old books which seemed all right fifty years ago. I was struck with this the other day in reading the "Pilgrim's Progress." Christian and his companion behaved towards Ignorance and Talkative in a way that now quite goes against our better feelings. They treated them in a patronising and disrespectful way, even when they did not treat them with absolute rudeness. There is no kindness in their demeanour towards them, and one feels that no soul could now be won to GOD by

such rough and inconsiderate behaviour. But, nevertheless, the "Pilgrim's Progress," after the Bible, is one of the best half-dozen books ever written.

When James and John asked our Lord if they might call down fire from heaven (as Elijah did) on the Samaritans who refused to receive Him, Christ reproved them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." What Elijah could scarcely be blamed for doing, had become positively wrong a thousand years later ; and what Christian and Hopeful could do two hundred years ago, has, thank GOD, become practically impossible now.

It is a good change, but it is not without its dangers, for there is an opposite extreme, and, now-a-days, sin is looked on by some people as scarcely more blameworthy than disease. This is a great evil.

Whatever may be maintained in argument as logical, we all know that we *are guilty* when we do wrong, either by thought, word, or deed, and nothing is worse than the theory that we are *not* guilty, and are no more responsible for sinning than for our sufferings in fever or small pox. The theory may be argued in talk, but I do not suppose there is any theorist who, when it comes to practice, does not indignantly blame cruelty, dishonesty, and idleness, however much he may try to palliate the measure of their guilt by circumstances of temptation and heredity. Few people will exculpate a servant who has ungratefully robbed and cheated them, or a rival who has wickedly calumniated them.

Secondly, the Evangelist now-a-days does not try to excite surprise and astonishment at the greatness of GOD'S plan of salvation. This too, is a good change; for it ought not to surprise us that GOD, Who is Almighty Love, should exceed our highest conceptions of love, perseverance, wisdom, and power. It is *not* strange that Christ should have lived and died to save us. It is *not* strange that poor sinful creatures should be blessed in the greatest way possible by Him. We do not hear it said now-a-days that GOD was not bound to take any notice of us, and that He would have been justified in sending us all to hell. We know now that such words are untrue, and are an insult to the GOD Who is perfect in wisdom, justice, and love. There is only one perfect thing for GOD to do, and *He always does it every moment, for all of us.* Let us be grateful, but not astonished.

Evangelists now-a-days do not use the same anecdotes which they formerly used to illustrate salvation. It is a long time since I heard the bad story of a schoolmaster punishing an innocent boy instead of a guilty boy, and letting the guilty boy off because he had already punished an innocent boy for the fault committed. Now-a-days we know that the schoolmaster who did this would be an absurd and unjust person, and to attribute such behaviour to GOD would be wicked, if it were not done in ignorance. The foundation of the Gospel is that GOD is absolutely good and fair, and that though He will never rest till we are holy and good, yet that all the time He is



Almighty Love, and that one of His attributes never clashes with another. There is still much to be done in removing the prejudice that has been created against GOD by ignorant preachers who have misrepresented Him. Beware of an odd false doctrine, misnamed "The Sovereignty of GOD."

Thirdly, it is to be noticed that *threats* have changed their character. The most effective threats now are as to the *legitimate consequences and developments of sin*—matters that can be proved and verified by all who have eyes, and ears, and minds. The isolation and decay and misery of the selfish self-righteous person, the wretchedness and suffering of the grossly self-indulgent, and the destitution that comes of idleness, can all be powerfully stated, and the preacher is readily believed; and the doctrine of hell (that is of an after state in which the soul suffers for having made itself into an evil soul) is so reasonable, that it is effective, even with sceptics, who refuse the authority of the Bible.

But certain *imaginative* assertions about hell are less used, for they are often received doubtfully by thoughtful people, and the effect of the address is spoilt by them. Twenty years ago I heard a clergyman in the west end of London dwelling very much on the horrors of hell; speaking of the torments of the lost, and describing even the smell of burnt flesh as one of its features. But such sermons are not preached now, and it is certainly a good thing. For the disgust and terror at such descriptions are only transitory emotions,

and a revulsion against them is sure to take place afterwards. The taunts of infidels and atheists on this subject have not been without their use, and people are now more impressed by quiet earnest words about the darkness and the remorse which come from indulged sin and neglected opportunities. People know that whatever hell may mean (and it means something very awful), it does *not* mean that GOD is cruel, and behaves towards His offspring in a way that the wickedest of men would not behave. Pain and suffering are blessings when He sends them, but He is always the GOD of Love, Wisdom, and Justice.

We may be thankful for the fresh light that illumines the Gospel on these and other points. \*

As we get to know GOD better, we begin to learn the truth of what St. John tells us, that "Perfect Love casteth out fear, for fear hath torment." We know that the desire of GOD is that all His creation should be happy as well as holy. And as a means to perfection we should gratefully accept what pain and distress He sends.

I know only one person in whom the love of GOD seems to have absolutely killed all fear. For myself, I still fear for *myself* and for *others*. I dread that, in spite of GOD'S complete forgiveness of my sins, and in spite of the Divine life in me, I may still pass into the next life much less perfected than I ought to be and might be.

And I feel how important, and true, and valuable a

motive *fear* is to those who are living mere earthly lives. "The fear of the Lord is clean;" and there is just cause to fear hell. "How can they escape if they neglect so great salvation?" Oh, that they may choose life—that they may repent—that they may receive Christ as Saviour and Master now in this life.

My desire to bring before you the subject of evangelising, and the great lack and need of it at present is so great, that I have devoted to it almost the whole of this July letter, instead of giving you, as usual, a regular Scripture lesson.

"By all means, save some," must be our motto.

And now this long letter must draw to a close.

I want once more, dear comrades, to praise you for your faith, your diligence, your love, and your discipline. In all these great qualities I believe that you are growing, and it is hard to tell which is the most important of them.

I believe that what makes our officers so specially valued is their *discipline*. They know how to respect and obey rules, even if they do not thoroughly like them. This is discipline.

The questions sometimes arise in the heart: "Why should I wear uniform so strictly? Why should I go to bed early, and rise so as to be dressed and ready at seven? Why should I keep a visiting book? Why should I regularly take my rest day *as* rest and recreation? Why should I not write letters to my last station?" And the answer is: "Because these are rules of the Society to which, by GOD'S calling and

Providence, I belong ; and because, therefore, while I belong to it, I cannot break its rules *without sinning.*" GOD calls His servants to be strictly honourable in such matters ; and if they fail here, the blessing in their work is impaired. As I say, I thank GOD for your loyalty and careful obedience.

And now, farewell, comrades. Pray for us as we also pray for you. GOD bless you every one.—E.C.

P.S. (NOTE).—I have submitted this letter, in proof, to one of our most loved and honoured Bishops, and he has made some comments on it which I should have liked to have embodied in the letter if it had not been already printed. But instead of this I will give you some of his words. He says, "I should always ground my converting teaching on the fact that God has called and chosen them in their baptism." It is, of course, not a matter of difference of belief, but simply of how it is best to awaken and win souls which are apparently blind and indifferent.—E.C.

September, 1902.

DEAR COMRADES,

Again I thank you heartily for all your warm and loyal replies to the last letter. It is good to feel that our hearts beat in unison. God is caring each moment for everyone of us

One of our Mission Nurses writes to me about a difficulty. She says that sometimes in visiting a case she feels no power of God's Spirit, but everything seems cold, with little consciousness of guidance as to what she should say; while at another time she seems on fire and able to help happily. What is the reason of this?

Generally speaking, we need not be disturbed about our emotions. They are not always under control. If the Holy Spirit shows us any fault which led to our being out of heart, then we must confess it and put it away, but if this is not the case we may be content with obeying God simply and faithfully, either with or without the sense of His Spirit moving in us. Often the best work is done in dryness and darkness. *God blesses drudgery*, and it might not be good for us if we always felt that delightful illumination which He occasionally vouchsafes. *If we wait for this, as some people are apt to do*, it means weakness and unsatisfactoriness as to final results.

But remember that there is *drudgery and drudgery*.

Satan is very deceitful, and I have known two valued Officers lately whom he has been trying to deceive into the idea that they need not worry because they have no visible *results*, which is a very different thing from having no "feeling." I heard of a clergyman the other day who said it was such a comfort to him—as he had apparently no results from his work—to remember that Noah had preached and preached, and yet got nobody but his own family into the ark—all went to Hades (where Christ found them 2,000 years later). Mr. Aitken told me of a Vicar who, when leaving his parish after years of labour, said to his Verger, "Well, I hope I have done a *little* good here." And the Verger, to cheer him up, replied, "Well, at any rate, sir, you have not done any *harm*." Rather poor comfort!

We *must* work for definite results. If, after months of effort, there is nothing to show for it, we may be pretty sure that there is something wrong with ourselves, and that we have not been going quite the right way about it. I do not mean that there must be startling conversions always, but there must be signs of lives changed or changing.

A very earnest, good Vicar has written the following words in a letter to me, and as I used to have the fault myself I am copying them out for you.

"I have from time to time noticed among some of your men a certain 'unctuousness' which offends, and I thought Captain ——— rather erred in this way. It was partly in the tone of his voice, partly in a some-

what cringing attitude, and partly in a continuous and I think rather unnatural use of the holy Name of Jesus. I can believe that in his case this is a mark of humility and devotion, but unconverted people are apt to put it down to 'cant and humbug.' I know you will all agree with me that when men cease to be natural their power lessens."

I suppose this is the fault which Solomon aimed at when he warned us not to be "righteous over much." No one can be too good, but there is an over-pious manner which has its root in self-consciousness or in spiritual priggishness, and which is almost fatal if we are to win manly men and womanly women.

And now we will get to our Scripture lesson.

I think perhaps there is no chapter in the Bible which has blessed me more than the

#### EIGHTH OF MATTHEW.

It contains the story of eight forms of evil which our Lord met and conquered. Years ago I heard an address by Andrew Jukes, on this subject, and his thoughts remain with me to-day, and will, I hope, be seed for you, too.

It follows immediately after the Sermon on the Mount. We are told that as He came down from the mountain multitudes followed Him, impressed and invigorated, no doubt, by His words.

The first evil that He met was leprosy, and there is perhaps a difficulty in preaching on this story because it is so beautiful that it has become somewhat hackneyed. And yet if we look prayerfully into it we shall probably find new points.

As you are aware, I have seen more of leprosy than most people, for one of the reasons of my last travelling in India was that I might investigate the disease. And afterwards I went to stay at Molokai with Father Damien, where there are always more than a thousand lepers located. It was a wonderful experience, to be under the shade of the tall cliffs, and staying in the two villages, Kalawao and Kalapaupa. Everyone I met was afflicted with this terrible disease, and most of them showed signs of it in their faces and hands.

Leprosy has always been chosen as a kind of parable of sin, and especially of the sin of impurity. There are three kinds. First, the white leprosy, which is described in the Bible, and which is now rare, though I have seen it occasionally. In it the whole body shows a sort of scaly whiteness, but it does not affect the health of the sufferer so much as might be expected. As a matter of fact we find that Naaman and Gehazi, who suffered from it, were both able to attend on their masters, and were not, apparently, unfitted for fighting or for household work.

But the other kinds are dreadful. In the anæsthetic leprosy the body dwindles and loses power of feeling and motion, and then the hands and feet begin to waste away and become mere stumps, till at last the poor leper is so enfeebled that he becomes the prey of fever, dysentery, or some other disease, and slowly dies.

The tubercular leprosy is even worse, and it often exists together with the other sort. It means swellings and tubercles and distortion, so that I should not like to describe to you how awful its appearance is.



Leprosy may be called incurable, for though remedies are sometimes claimed, yet I fear there is no proof that a leper has ever been permanently and entirely cured, though the symptoms may be much alleviated. In the earliest stages its ravages are concealed, and its progress is for a long time slow. But sooner or later the malady conquers, and means pain, depression, and death. We all know how sin is often concealed for a long time, and yet how surely it destroys, and when it is finished brings forth death. There is only one Healer for it, and that is Christ Himself, He Who put forth His Hand without shrinking and touched the poor leper, and said to him, "Be clean."

How wonderful an experience that the man who had been expelled from human society and avoided with terror by friends and relations, should suddenly find himself cured! Christ's first command after healing him is full of teaching. He was not to talk about it, but he was to *show himself*. Is not this the best way always? Talking and preaching are good things, but the sight of a clean and righteous life is better and more effective. It does not impress us much to hear people say that they are good, but it impresses everybody when they see a poor wretched, drunken or impure person changed and living a right and Christian life. I believe we have had more conversions through the lives of the C.A. Officers (men and women) than by their preaching, though preaching has saved many, too, and one of our greatest

desires now is that we should become more of a preaching order than we are. I think if we studied more, and prayed more, and were more watchful for objects and illustrations and fresh methods of work, that we should be greater soul-winners than we are.

I daresay that you have noticed that the leper's faith was an imperfect faith. He believed in the *power* of Christ to heal him, but he was not quite sure that he would be *willing* to heal him, so he says, "Lord, *if Thou wilt*, Thou canst make me clean." And the Heart of Christ was so full of love and tenderness, that He made no difficulty about being so far misunderstood. He did not reproach the leper for thinking that He could be indifferent, but He put forth His Hand immediately and healed him.

The father of the lunatic boy, who was healed after the Transfiguration, had just the contrary sort of faith. He had been bitterly disappointed that the disciples could do nothing for the poor lad, and he could only come to Christ with the words, "If Thou canst." He had no doubt of His willingness, but it had been proved to him how more than ordinarily difficult the cure would be. He had, however, come to Almighty Love, and there was no failure.

But Christ's Heart could reach even more hopeless cases. There was once a poor palsied man let down through the roof by four friends, and laid at His feet. We are not told that he had any faith at all, but his *friends* had faith and that was enough for Christ, and He made him strong and well. Do we bring souls to

Christ as these four men brought the paralytic? If we do we shall not bring them in vain. I have heard a fine story of four or five Christian men agreeing together to concentrate their prayers and efforts on one special case, *praying and working* till the victory was won. It is this earnest, determined work which tells, if Satan's captives are to be set free. Some of us fail from a want of businesslike persistence.

But there was a case where we are not told that either the friends or the man had any faith. The man was dead. His mother did nothing but weep. The friends seem to have been silent; but the Heart of Christ went out to the widow and her son, and as He went through the little town of Nain He raised him from the dead without any appeal from anyone.

Could anything be worse than for nobody to care? Yes; for we are told of a case in which not only was there no appeal to Christ to save, but there was a maddened cry, "*Depart from me, what have I to do with Thee.*" But Christ, as ever, was the Saviour, and the demoniac, who dreaded the sight and the presence of Christ, was delivered from his oppressors, and sat clothed and in his right mind at the feet of his Lord. He who had declared that he had nothing to do with Christ began to pray that he might be always with Him. Such is the all-conquering love of Christ.

One of the points in which leprosy resembles sin is its hidden character. Often it is latent for five years before it shows itself, and even then it is (for a while) only the sufferer who knows of its existence.

I remember that when I was in the Sandwich Islands, I met on board a steamer a young, light-hearted girl with a guitar, who, day and night, kept singing, and talking, and laughing. How surprised I was at being told that she was a leper! She had told me that she was going to *visit* Molokai, but that she was not a leper.

A friend of mine, Mrs. Trotter, was calling my attention the other day to the fact that in many cases gross and palpable sin is latent and hidden for half a life-time. Then circumstances or temptations arise which call it forth in all its deformity, and everyone is horrified at it. She was instancing Queen Catherine de Medici. Till she was about forty-five she seemed a good, religious woman, but then she became a monster of horrible wickedness through her determined ambition to push the fortunes of her children—three of whom became kings. For their sakes she intrigued, and lied, and became a wholesale murderess.

In my own experience I know parents who were excellent till their children began to grow up, and who then began to call right wrong, and wrong right, and to do all sorts of vulgar, worldly and wicked things for their children's sake.

A gentle mother sometimes becomes a tigress when her children are concerned.

It is very awful to feel that we may have the germs of unknown sin, like leprosy, within us. I know of a pleasant, generous couple who lived a useful, virtuous life, and did their duty all round, and were much

respected *till* a rich relation died and unexpectedly left them a large fortune. Immediately they changed and became vulgar, ostentatious and stingy. And they were laughed at and avoided, where previously they had been approved and sought after.

Probably none of us half judge ourselves, or guess what evils of selfishness lie hidden within us. I thought we got hints of it last June, when the Coronation was put off. It made me think of the following epitaph:—

“What I spent I had,  
What I saved I lost,  
What I gave I have.”

This is an inscription on a tomb in Devonshire of one of the Courtney family. It is, of course, true of all of us when we come to die, but it comes curiously true also in this present life. When the Coronation was postponed the kindness and unselfishness and hospitality that it had called forth remained. The cormorant selfishness and intrigues, and extravagance and the greedy desire to get the best places remained also as painful memories. Nobody saw the show, but the friendly, thoughtful things that were done are remembered, and so are the worldly and selfish actions.

When everything was stopped how many people wished that they had been kind and generous to the right people! But the opportunity had come and gone. All the fruits of selfish fussing were lost when the disappointment came. What a lesson on greediness!

It is a dreadful experience to discover that someone whom one has known and trusted is secretly leprous.

Mrs. Kipling once told me the following story which had come into her experience:—

“In India there lived a young couple who were fond of entertaining their friends, and who gave very pleasant dinner parties. Suddenly all their friends began to refuse their invitations without any satisfactory reason being given. They wondered what they could have done to offend them, and to be thus suddenly boycotted. One day they both called on the judge and his wife, and saw them separately. Presently the judge's wife said, ‘What sort of a cook have you got?’ The lady replied, ‘He is a very good cook and we are very pleased with him, but strange to say I have never seen him, for he was engaged by another servant, and when I have asked to see him he has always been out buying necessary things. But he is an excellent cook.’ ‘I can tell you,’ said the judge's wife, ‘why you have never seen him, *he is a leper!* and that is the reason.’

You may imagine the horror with which the lady heard this piece of news. It made her feel quite sick, and that evening before dinner, she said to her husband, ‘I am not going to dine, I shall only have some coffee to-night.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I think I will only have coffee, too, for I do not feel inclined for dinner.’

“And then they found out that the judge had told him the same thing which the judge's wife had told her. Of course it was now quite clear why their friends had declined to dine with them. The cook was sent away, and afterwards got into the family of

a person of very high rank who knew as little about his cook as other people knew."

We do not have many lepers in England, but many of us have experienced the shock which it is to find that some worker whom we have known and worked with is a prey to some terrible form of sin, known to himself and to God, but to no one else, till it suddenly becomes apparent. Truly the taint of leprosy is upon us all, but the power of God and the grace of Christ can keep it in abeyance, and eventually heal it.

There are many sins which are unsuspected till the circumstances arise which call them forth. Some people develop a proud, imperious spirit when they leave the subordinate position which they occupied with honour, and become hated, as a "Jack-in-office" is almost universally hated.

And some "learn to be busybodies," says St. Paul. Let none of us be what St. Peter calls "a busybody and a meddler in other men's matters." It is a sad fault, and generally comes about through being spoiled by somebody's injudicious petting. The worker comes to neglect his or her work and to take to the easier and lighter work of meddling. I always pity the poor meddlers, for in the end they are sure to get more kicks than half-pence.

The second evil which Christ encountered was palsy—a type of a spiritual disease with which most of us are familiar. The palsied man has lost his power of motion and of work, and keeps shaking all over. Sometimes he cannot speak. He has to be continually

attended to instead of himself caring for others, and he is, of course, quite unable to do a day's work or even an hour's work. We all know people whose souls have the palsy, spiritually; they are incompetent and useless, and nobody would think of expecting them to do work. They are perhaps present at our meetings, but only as a sort of pastime. They just have to be attended to out of love and pity, but as to helping others or earning their own living they cannot do it.

Christ was able to heal this man immediately so that he was restored to health and work. He healed him though he was at a distance from Him, just as He heals people now, though they have never seen Him face to face. As He healed another palsied man through the love and intercession of his friends, so He healed this one through the love and intercession of his Master.

Much of the interest of this story depends on the delightful character of the centurion, who was the master of the palsied man. Evidently Christ loved this man and took pleasure in his character. It seems as if there was a kind of rush of friendliness that came to him from Christ, warmed into spontaneous love and desire to help, a beautiful impulse which I wish we could all habitually command.

Sometimes it seems to us almost hopeless to expect ever to love people properly, and we are tempted to give up the task in despair and substitute benevolence (an excellent quality) for love.

What I should like would be to practice something



warmer and better than benevolence, and less fitful and dangerous than "being in love," which must, of course, be a limited experience. Indeed, it is a question whether it is either possible or desirable to be in love with more than one person at a time, whereas we want to love everybody. I have not a word to say against being in love as long as it is with the right person and at the right time. It is God's plan for most of us, and it is a happy intoxication, but it often makes people oblivious of others, and sometimes it is very temporary and does not lead to that steady self-sacrifice and unselfishness which we often find among those who practice the cooler virtue of benevolence.

But if we read the stories of Christ (and of many others, thank God), we find that there is a Divine impulse, which goes beyond duty, and which means a beautiful rush of ardent friendliness. Many people feel this naturally towards children (as evidently Christ did). How His Heart went out towards some of the people whom He met! For instance, to the rich young man, and to the centurion whom we are now studying.

The Bible sketches his character in very few words and yet it tells us a great deal about him. He was liberal, and broad-minded, and religious, for though he was a Gentile he had built a synagogue for the Jews (probably the very same synagogue of which I saw the beautiful ruins in the grass at Capernæum, when I was there some years ago. There were inscriptions on the stones which went far to prove its

authenticity). Though he was a soldier, and rich, he was humble and considerate, wishing to save our Lord trouble, and not thinking himself good enough even to receive Him under his roof.

Yet he was a man who had the power and habit of command, and who knew how to deal with those who were under him. He loved discipline for himself and for others. He knew his master, and he knew his servants. He had the right spirit of socialism without any of its occasional cant and rubbish.

He had a simple strong faith which Christ greatly admired. Evidently his belief was that Christ had angels at His command whom he used to send to sufferers.

He was affectionate and warm hearted towards his servant, unlike many people, who neglect and feel indifferent to those who are of a different class to themselves. Probably he was a friend of Jairus's, as they were both rich men living in the same place. Lastly, he was a diplomatic man who knew how to ingratiate himself wisely and rightly. I think we all feel that we should have loved this man and we are glad that he went away rejoicing.

Perhaps we wonder whether he was converted, and we place him with Cornelius before he met Peter, and with many others whom we love and yet feel rather uncertain about. Probably God has been caring about them and teaching them all their lives through, and they are ready to meet the messenger of God who is to open to them the next door. Somebody has said

(I think it was Disraeli) that all great men are of the same religion. There is more truth in this saying than at first appears, if he means *really* great men. It may be said that, almost without exception, great men have believed in God—in a God of goodness and Almighty love, and have believed also in the great unalterable laws of right and wrong being binding on all of us. Also in the duty of fighting against meanness, cruelty, and injustice. I am speaking of really great men, not of those who have only been called great while they lived. Herod and Pilate were praised while they lived, but now their memory is detested.

With such men as the centurion one gratefully obeys God's command to "Honour all men." I believe that he must have been a true disciple of Christ.

And now we come to the third evil, fever. Apparently, on the same day, Christ found Peter's mother-in-law sick of a fever in the house. He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she arose and walked. Fever is a disease which in Eastern countries is extremely common. People think little of it, and do little except lie by till they are better. Often they have it many times. But it is a grievous and incapacitating trouble. The fever stricken person is flushed, but it is not the flush of health. He is always tossing about, and restless, but it is a useless, unhappy, tossing about which only means suffering. There is no appetite for wholesome food, bread and meat are refused and the person is always thirsty without being satisfied. Do we not know many Christians who are fever stricken, who

have lost their taste for the Bread of Life (God's Word), and who find their Bibles tasteless and repellant? They are thirsty and yet they are never satisfied. I remember a lady at Clifton who complained that she had been to every Church in the place and could get nothing that helped or satisfied her; "*What I want*, you know," said she, "is the teaching of the minor Prophets," When the fever is bad then delirium comes on and the sufferer does not even know his best friend, not even the good physician who stands by the bed desiring to heal him. One of the first things the doctor does is to say, "Let me see your tongue," and when the patient puts it out, the tongue is furry and foul. Comrades, the foul tongue is an unvariable sign of a fevered soul. Do we not all know some who come to us continually with angry complaints of others, complaints of neglect or coldness, or unkindness. How often it means that the trouble is with the speaker who has a fever in the soul and whose tongue therefore is foul. Perhaps, we have, most of us, had a touch of fever ourselves—restless, evil speaking, dissatisfied, and not recognising the one who sticks to us closer than a brother. If we are to work for Him we must have our fever assuaged by His touch. I know of one of our Officers now who has a fever, and who won't admit it, though every one else knows it.

And now the evening came on and Christ had to meet and cure worse forms of evil still. For round the house they brought to Him many who were possessed with devils.

Probably no one has ever been possessed with devils who has not begun by little acts of unfaithfulness which have gradually led to possession. They have given place to the devil till at last they could not shut him out. And so they have eventually become "possessed" by him.

In the same way it is possible to be possessed by the Blessed Spirit of God. Love can take gradual possession of a man or woman. And then suddenly a great light comes, and all see that he or she is possessed by the Spirit of God.

I suppose there are many people now who are tempted and tormented by devils, and some who are possessed by them. Sometimes as in the Gospel stories these poor men and women get into religious services and listen to the Gospel just as the wretched girl at Philippi did. Such persons are always an anxiety in a meeting for it soon appears that something is wrong. And perhaps there is no one there who has the power to cast out the evil spirit. Pity and love are needed in such cases as well as firmness and power. It is *Christ's Power* only which can make wrong right here. *How* He healed we scarcely know, but we are told that He "took out infirmities and sickness on Himself," identifying Himself with suffering humanity just as truly as He identified Himself with sinful humanity by bearing every one of the sins that have ever been committed in this poor fallen world. And we have to follow in His steps and in our measure to be like Him.

The fifth evil which He dealt with was the wilfulness of a man who came to Him saying, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Christ knew that one who came with only his "I will," must break down under the difficulties of the way. He had not counted the cost. He needed to be checked. The keen and loving eye of the Saviour saw the danger and made the man see it too. What was the end? We are not told. But we all know cases of men and women who hastily suppose that they are called to C.A. work and who find their self-denial break down, and who have to fail.

Then came another man with exactly the opposite danger. He was too backward. But Christ desired to have this warm hearted affectionate man for a disciple. Doubtless there was an explanation of His saying to Him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead." Christ knew all the circumstances and therefore could say, "Follow me." There are many people now who claim that the deadness of their relations and the people with whom they live is a reason for not following Christ. But He knows better. He knows that the faults of other people need never be a hindrance to us, but on the contrary should be a motive and a spur.

And now He entered into a ship and His disciples followed Him, and the seventh evil came to pass. For there arose a great tempest, and the waves rolled over the ship and it seemed as if all would be drowned.

Christ was asleep, and His disciples came and woke

Him saying, "Lord save us, we perish." But He turned and reproached them.

"Why are ye fearful?" He said. Then he rebuked the winds and there was a great calm. How slowly we learn the truth that where Christ is, there is no real danger for those who trust and obey Him. We need only fear sinning. Yet, again and again, as we encounter the storms of this life, we are in danger of being overcome by fear and anguish. Why are we not always like the man whom David tells us of, that he would never be "afraid of any evil tidings," knowing that all that came to him must be not only good, but the very best?

And now we come to the eighth and last evil which (in this chapter) Christ met and overcame. It is a story that has so deep a meaning that we scarcely like to say all that we feel about it.

He crossed the mystic lake which is an enlargement of the River Jordan (the river of death). He came to the other side of it, and there among the tombs He saw an awful sight. A man possessed of devils in their worst form was there, living in the tombs, exceeding fierce, with all the chains broken with which he had been bound. *No man might pass by that way*, and the wretched denizen of the place could only cry out "What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God. Art Thou come hither to torment me before the time?" What strange infernal words!

It must all have been a kind of rehearsal to Christ of His visiting the spirits in prison later on after He had been crucified and before He rose again.

The demoniac flung himself down at His feet. And can we imagine with what a mingling of pity and sternness Christ learned his name and fixed the fate of the Legion of Demons.

And oh! how beautiful it must have been to see the saved man, sitting clothed and in his right mind at the Master's feet, and humbly beseeching Him that he might still be with Him. And what a touch of love and forbearance we find when Christ, instead of granting his request, sent him back to preach His gospel to the very people who had just prayed Christ to depart out of their coasts. What an awful prayer that was! It seems to have been the result partly of terror, and partly of anger at the destruction of their swine.

Note the three prayers in this story. The devils prayed that they might enter into the swine, the Gadarenes prayed that He would depart from them. And both their dreadful requests were granted. But the man's beautiful prayer that he might remain with Christ was not granted, but a better thing was given him. It was safer for him to be evangelising than even to remain with Christ (in the body). What a lesson to those who complain that their prayers are not granted! How little we know what is best for us!

Three accounts are given us of this wonderful miracle, and one of them tells us of there being two demoniacs who were delivered. Probably one was secondary to the other. Remember that when the Bible tells us something more than once, it means special emphasis, and that great attention is to be paid to them.



I hope you will look on this chapter as a sample of what may be found in the four Gospels, if we prayerfully, and with God's Holy Spirit, seek for their hidden treasures.

Thanks be to God our Father for ever and ever, for giving us such a Saviour!

We had the other day a very valuable lecture in our Headquarters, and with Lady Paget's permission, I print a part of it with the belief that its wisdom and common sense will bless you, and increase and prolong your powers of work for God and man.

#### LECTURE TO CADETS BY LADY PAGET,

JULY 15TH, 1902.

"I have been asked to speak to you by a friend of mine, who is a friend of yours, and I therefore make no excuse for what may appear presumption.

"Our subject is hygiene, or the *laws of health*, and I must tell you that our best teachers in this science are often the *animals* which are free and can follow their instinct.

"Hygiene simply means putting into practice the laws of nature and using for our benefit the forces which it provides. To do this it is not necessary to be a doctor, everybody with common sense and insight can do it. Some of the best hygienists that ever lived were persons without education. One of them was a Silesian peasant. He found out the rules of nature about water, and thousands of sick and dying people were cured by the application of water applied in

different ways. Another man called Kuhne died only lately. He was a carpenter and lived at Leipzig. He found out the rules of nature about food and cured many by diet only. Then there was Father Kneipp, a village priest, who used to send his patients out bareheaded and barefooted even when it rained, and whose cures looked like miracles. Many other hygienists have achieved wonderful success without medicines.

"A person with a well-balanced mind and self-restraint can generally manage his or her health by attending to a few rules. This costs no money and bestows upon them that precious gift, health. Without it, life is handicapped.

"What annoys me is that people do not seem to think it worth their while to keep well, and yet when they are ill they want others to pity them. This is not the right attitude of mind towards so important a matter. When I see people with ailments which I *know* they could quite well get rid of, I do not feel much pity. It irritates me and annoys me, just as it would, to see a flower in a pot dying from want of water, or a horse with a tight bearing rein.

"The rules I am going to suggest are good for all, though each person may modify them and adjust them to their own case.

"We will begin with the invigorating, healing, and cleansing properties of fresh air. This is the element most necessary to us. We could not live many minutes without it. And yet there are persons who

almost shut out this first of health-giving factors. Plenty of pure air is the condition of healthy life. In large towns the purest air is obtainable during the night, and therefore everybody ought to sleep with their *windows open*, especially those who have delicate throats and chests, and young children. Pure air is not only the greatest healer, but it also makes the blood better and redder, it encourages the renewal of tissue, and it sends streams of new life through the body. Far the best way of healing a wound is to expose it to the air, the only danger is of getting impurities into it. It is a well-known fact that in war the soldiers who are in tents or in sheds recover far sooner than those who are in hospital. And in many places this fact is deemed of such paramount importance that arrangements are made during the summer to leave the hospital patients in the garden altogether, or (as is done in New York) on the roofs. Special lifts into which the patient is put (bed and all), deposit him in a temporary garden made on the top of the house. And here he remains as long as it is possible. In Vienna I used to see happy and contented patients lying in their beds under the big trees of the hospital garden. There would be little consumption if everybody slept with open windows and did the *breathing exercises* four or five times a day. This exercise consists in drawing a deep breath through the nose and inflating the lungs and stomach as much as possible, and for as long as you can, and then expelling the breath through the mouth by contracting the

muscles of the stomach. This should be done five times running, preferably out of doors or standing near an open window. You will not only feel the benefit to your body, but also in your mind, for it will raise your spirits in a marvellous way, and if you feel low and tired, you will return to your work with zest. For nervous people this exercise is most valuable.

"But it is not only by breathing the air that we are benefited, but also by its playing over our bodies. In dressing and undressing, the air ought to be allowed to circulate freely around the body for some time, and those especially who have any chest trouble, ought to take air baths whenever the opportunity offers. It is quite a mistake to think that one catches cold by the body being exposed to the air. On the contrary, one experiences a feeling of warmth when one puts one's clothes on again, and an increase of vitality. What makes one catch cold is the wearing of many and heavy clothes, and walking in them, for then we get hot and tired, and in that state the slightest draught gives a cold.

"I often pity poor children whom I see dragging themselves about on a summer's day in thick woollen or even velveteen dresses, wearing a hot felt hat without any brim to protect them from the sun, and heavy laced boots with knitted worsted stockings. How can a child, sweltering in such clothes, enjoy life? This practice often lays the foundation of lifelong delicacy. Would it not be much better, cleaner, and cheaper, to wear a linen frock and everything light and porous?

Then the bodies would benefit by the healthful air and grow up strong and hardy.

"I should like to call your attention especially to the *cleansing* properties of fresh air. Though not equal to those of water they are the best substitute for it. It is therefore necessary to expose garments which cannot be washed to the contact of fresh air after and before wearing them. For in our clothes a number of poisons accumulate, not only those which we may bring in from the street, but also those deposited in them by perspiration, which is nothing more than an effort of nature to rid our bodies of the poisons which from different causes accumulate.

"There are many towns on the continent where, when you go out walking in the morning, you see all the mattresses, blankets, quilts, and pillows, hanging out of the window. This to some may appear strange, but it certainly is very healthy.

"Nobody catches a cold from sitting with the windows wide open, but what is dangerous, is to leave open only a crack of the window, and a crack of the door. In this way a draught comes, and a *thin* draught, and it does little good in airing the room.

"Now that we are on the topic of colds, I should like to say a few words on the wrongness of catching them and carrying them about amongst our friends and neighbours. Persons with colds are a nuisance to everybody by their coughing and sneezing. But besides this they are a *danger*, for they disseminate their colds. And to those who are not strong, colds

often mean bronchitis, asthma, and even inflammation of the lungs, and consumption. I speak feelingly, for nobody used to have worse colds than I had, and I lived in a climate where it was difficult to shake off any evil that once got a hold. But I found that if on feeling the first shiver I at once drank a tumbler of hot water and put on a cloak or shawl for an hour or two (so as to induce a slight perspiration) it almost certainly passed off. The morning after doing this no cold bath should be taken; and for those who are delicate, it is the best way to stay one day indoors if the weather is cold. To those in whom the cold-catching habit is deeply ingrained, I should advise adding to the hot water one pillule of Dulcamara in damp weather, and one of Aconite if it is dry. These remedies are perfectly harmless and their action is so direct that they enable the system to throw off the attack. They are homœopathic remedies.

“It cannot be repeated too often that people with colds ought to be careful not to approach others too closely, and not to kiss children. For a cold (like influenza) is most infectious. People with perpetual colds are a real nuisance. And in rooms and railway carriages they always insist upon having everything shut up, much to the discomfort and danger of others. In these latter years the wonderful efficiency of air and sun has been discovered, and though we may not all have the opportunity of taking air and sun baths, yet we can do much in that direction by clothing ourselves in light and porous stuffs.

"Fresh air and light are the enemies of evil smells. There is no doubt that persons accustomed to plenty of good air are more sensitive to smells, and often at the moment suffer more from them than persons who are accustomed to live in close and impure air. But the very fact of being conscious of an evil is a protection. Bad drainage is of course the source of disease just as is impure water. It cannot be often enough repeated that these evils are at the bottom of a great many illnesses. Bad drainage, bad water, bad milk, adulterated foods, smoke, and dirt are a disgrace to the age in which we live. But they will continue to exist as long as the public is indifferent and accepts them as all in the day's work. Still there is *hope*. For things have vastly changed within these last thirty years.

"I should like to say something on the wonderful properties of water. On the Continent English people are looked upon as a race quite apart from others, because under almost every circumstance they indulge themselves in a tub every morning. This is of course, right and laudable as far as cleanliness goes, but it is curious that a nation so distinguished by tubbing should be so ignorant of the other applications of water. And yet these are so simple, so effective, and so various that if one understands them, one can often dispense with other remedies. I shall only have time to mention a few, but I think that those who once have experienced their benefit will naturally be drawn on to use them always. For instance in indigestion,

lumbago, sleeplessness and a number of other troubles, wet compresses round the waist will give relief when everything else fails. They must, of course, be applied in the proper way. Bandages should be half a yard wide and 5 yards long. Coarse towelling is the best material. One-fourth of the length must be steeped in water, wrung out, and then wound round the body until the bandage reaches from just under the chest and covers well the hips. It must be wrapped very tight, not allowing any air to filter in. And for those who are chilly I should recommend another bandage of flannel over it. The most delicious warmth and comfort will soon be experienced, for the blood is all drawn to the surface under the bandage, the pores open, and the damp heat draws out the self-bred poisons which cause the illness. It is necessary to wash and boil these compresses often, in order to rid them of these imbibed poisons, for they might otherwise cause a violent irritation of the skin. You will be astonished to hear that the poisons are so potent that they often turn the water a milky white when the bandage is put into it. Everybody knows how quickly a sore throat is relieved by a wet compress. And inflammation of the lungs will generally vanish under proper packing in a few hours. In fevers of every kind, but especially in gastric and in typhoid, the sponging from head to foot, with water of the same temperature as the room, is not only the greatest relief to the patient, but, by disencumbering the pores of the skin from poisons and opening them, it helps to throw off



the illness. As an example of the extraordinary power of water I may mention the report of the German Army doctor, Wachsmuth, who during the terrible diphtheria epidemic in Prussia did not lose one case in 5,000. His method was simply to pack his patients from head to foot in wet sheets and to put a kettle of salt water to boil near the beds. The patients were also moved every twelve hours from one room to another, in order to prevent the expelled germs from re-poisoning them. Meanwhile the room was thoroughly aired and disinfected, and all the bed-clothes changed. This system of changing the room and the bed, might prove useful in other illnesses also. No medicines or injections of any kind were used. All the children recovered. I may add that this was a very severe epidemic, such as we have, thank God, not known for a great many years.

“ If water can produce such results, it is natural to suppose that it is one of the foremost agents for keeping in good health, and there are many different ways of taking our daily ablutions which contribute not a little to our moral tone (as Mr. Carlyle has told you in one of his books). I would for instance recommend all chilly people to use a good hard scrubbing brush in their bath, and to scrub themselves well with soap and water from head to foot till the blood circulates freely under the skin. They will find this much better than moping over the fire. An excellent remedy for sleeplessness and debility is a rapid ablution with cold water in the evening, and without

drying, getting into bed at once. The bedclothes must be warm and well drawn up to the chin. Nobody who has not tried this can imagine the wonderful comfort and restfulness it gives. Personally I have always preferred a cold bath in summer and a scrub in hot water in winter. In ablutions as in everything else it is wholesome to make a change. Nothing is so bad for our health of body or soul as routine. The thing to be borne in mind is to keep the pores clean and open, and the lungs full of fresh air. Water is not only necessary for the outside of our bodies, it is just as beneficial to our inner organs. A glass of hot water will not only stop a chill but save us from indigestion, just as a glass of cold water will purify our blood.

"As to our food, we ought when we eat to chew our food so thoroughly that, instead of swallowing it consciously, it ought to go down almost unconsciously. Half the amount of the usual food will then suffice to nourish us, though it may take us double the time to eat it. Not only do we assimilate our food much better, but we shall find ourselves in far better condition than we were before. (I may say that I have for a long time been a total abstainer.)

"Mind and thought have much to do with health. If, for instance, on awakening in the morning we at once make up our minds that we feel well and alert and that all will go well, we lay a good and solid foundation for success. Nothing is so deteriorating to health as to speak about our ailments to everybody, and give long descriptions of them. Our friends'

thoughts and our own will depress us, for *thoughts are things* and act upon us. If, on the contrary, we accustom ourselves and others to look upon us as well and strong, these very thoughts will contribute to our strength and health.

"Every man or woman who has not some organic disease, or has not been maimed by an accident, holds largely the power of being well in their own hands. But sacrifices have to be made, (which, however, will not be sacrifices for long.)

"Fresh air, plenty of water, deep breathing, pure food, easy clothing and constant occupation will nearly always secure health; and it is by strengthening our bodies that our tissues become capable of resisting infection and contamination. If we add to this the most scrupulous cleanliness, we may consider ourselves generally safe from infectious illnesses and poisons.

"Medicines are sometimes useful. We all know that Pulsatilla preserves from measles, Belladonna from scarlet fever, Cuprum from cholera, (and greatest boon of all) Arsenicum from the worst of all scourges, Influenza. One globule of Arsenicum taken every morning during a month has helped me to weather all the Influenza epidemics of these latter years, though I have been constantly in contact with its victims, (Homœopathic remedies).

"It is tragic to think of the millions of people whose lives are spent without their knowing how it feels to be really well. Think what a beautiful world this would be were sickness and disease banished from

it, and with them misery and vice. Suffering is often a consequence of wickedness, or mistakes or stupidity.

"The blessing and beauty of healthy living is, that it gives us the strength, and will to battle with evil, and to love the winter's frost, the storm and the gale.

"It gives, too, that insight into nature and into the workings of the Universe which is so necessary for workers.

"Be healthy, then, in body and mind, and may God bless and prosper you."

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I am anxious that some of our officers should improve in letter writing. Many of you write excellently, and my caution is not about writing letters to Headquarters, but about writing to Vicars. Sometimes the whole difference would be made if some expression of gratitude, of goodwill, or of pleasure in past or future work, were added to the business part of the letter. It is these little, thoughtful things which make so much difference in our success, and in the happiness we shed around us.

Many fine workers are almost starving for want of a little love and praise.

E.C.

*September, 1904.*

DEAR COMRADES,

Your replies to the last letter have made me very glad and thankful. GOD bless us every one, and cause us to know and serve Him better.

Spiritual progress is not easy work, and I do not think it becomes easier as we grow older. Some temptations doubtless lose their power. We get kinder, and in many cases the world and the flesh torment us less. But I find that self-indulgence, inaction, and earthliness are as hard—or harder—to overcome at sixty than they were at twenty and thirty. And even grosser evils like pride, animosity, and sensuality sometimes surprise us by sad proofs that they are not dead after all, but still ready to wound or drag down our souls.

Remember that the gift that is the most precious of all—the one that is worth sacrificing anything for—the one that is most easily lost or eluded in work—is the power of the Holy Ghost *present and felt* (whether with the worker alone, or in meetings).

We may have magnificent gatherings without it, but no numbers, no interest, no eloquence, can make up for its absence.

Cares and pleasures may check it, though they need not do so.

Activity and rush and noise may dispel it, though they need not do so.

The world, the flesh, and the devil are always its enemies.

Ten minutes with the felt active presence of the Holy Ghost are worth a year of mere activity and show. Treasure the still small voice as you would treasure rubies.

I am speaking to myself, GOD knows, more than to you.

It is Sunday, and I have just been praying for you all, bringing your names one by one before GOD.

I feel that it is a great responsibility for us to be working under a leader like Mr. Carlile, for his example in evangelising is almost unique, and if we do not follow it, and profit by it, we are wasting a benefit which GOD has given us.

It is not our way in the Church Army to be writing commendations of each other, but in this instance I must to some extent transgress our custom, because I am very anxious that you should catch his spirit, and learn to invent for yourselves suitable methods, or to copy them from him and from other evangelists.

His mind is never off the subject of soul winning, and that no doubt is one of the chief reasons of his success; but he talks so little about what he does, that words from other people are necessary if the lesson is to be pushed home as much as it ought to be. I am sending you, with this, a copy of his leaflet, "Corinthian Lines," and I want you to study it.

The point he emphasizes is that it is *not generally preaching* which finally brings to pass conversions, but *the convincing testimony*, one by one, of the people in the congregation. He claims that St. Paul's admonition and experience still holds good for us to-day. You will find the following words in I. Cor. xiv., 24 and 25.

"If all prophesy (that is, preach, or testify), and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face he will worship GOD, and report that GOD is in you of a truth."

The practice of this kind of testimony has, no doubt, largely died out in our Church, and we are, of course, far from advising that it should be used in *every service* or gathering. It might become mere routine, like other good things, and it certainly needs watching and direction. There will sometimes be unsatisfactory people whose testifying must be discouraged, or forbidden (either because their lives are inconsistent, or for some other reason).

But where the clergy—"winning souls wisely"—use it with discretion, they find it an *enormous power* for good, and especially for conversion.

All of us who preach know how apt to flag the attention of the audience is after the first few minutes, but it does not flag if there is a constant change of speakers. Each new voice makes a fresh incident,

and has a human interest. The fear and trembling of a beginner is often more interesting and fruitful of results than an excellent and polished address.

Very good and interesting sermons cannot always be had. A man can only use the talent that has been given to him, and fresh subjects, and illustrations, and stories, make a serious call on a preacher (whether lay or clerical) who has, perhaps, been ministering for a considerable time to the same people. But powerful help is at hand if he will use the laity, who are ready to testify, or who may without much difficulty *be trained* to testify. As a rule the laity do not speak so well as the clergy. But often lay speaking is more effective because it has more human interest, and is more like what each member of the audience would say if he could be induced to speak. Shyness and hesitation are in many instances a help, and make the words real, preventing too, the common danger of being *too long*.

It must be admitted that most speeches and many sermons *are* too long, but testimonies are almost always short, and their point lies more in the fact that the speakers have avowed themselves on the Lord's side, than that they have said anything that is otherwise very striking. In some cases, or on some occasions, the clergy have strong conscientious objections against women speaking or praying aloud. But women may be asked to testify silently by simply standing up for a moment. It is this "communication of faith" which becomes "effectual by the



acknowledging of every good thing which is in the speaker in Christ Jesus." (Philemon 6.)

If you have been at meetings or services conducted by Mr. Carlile, you are sure to have noticed that he is almost too anxious to keep himself in the background, and to put others forward. This is a great secret of success. He is the animating spirit which keeps the thing moving and effective. I think that he would not approve of even this much praise being given him, so I shall not submit this letter to him.

Those who have the power of *speaking* should always be on the watch lest they indulge themselves in it too much. It is always easy to persuade ourselves that we are interesting an audience, even though they may be in reality inattentive.

Enclosed is a copy of one of Mr. Carlile's handbills for a Saturday to Monday visit. It is printed on that pretty rainbow paper which is in itself an attraction. It means harder work than most of us could do, but Mr Carlile's visits are usually only from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning, and are meant to bring to a climax the Officer's work of the preceding months.

The Saturday meetings are chiefly for the sake of advertising the Sunday doings.

The importance of the open-air meetings cannot be over-rated. They are the best, and sometimes the only means of reaching outsiders. But besides this they are invaluable for workers. Mr. Carlile finds the half-past ten march into courts and alleys a great means

of blessing to Church people. "Put on goloshes and bring your umbrellas and let us stand in the open-air," he said to the regular church attendants, and they turned out in numbers—better than the regular C.A. soldiers.

The Sunday morning service is largely preparatory, and the Song Sermon for the children is to win the young ones, and to cause them to bring their parents, or to induce them to come, to the afternoon and evening meetings. Children are a great help in this and other ways.

The 3 o'clock Service for Men *means business*, means *conviction and conversion*, and it leads up to the main Service in the evening. At this last the Sermon is nearly an hour long, but it is the testimony of the people following it which, humanly speaking, does the work, and brings down the citadel.

Let your Gospel message be as simple and as clear as possible. Let it be *Christ crucified and living*. "The Lamb of GOD has taken away the sin of the world, and He is now present here to save you from guilt and from the power of sin.

Depend on the power and working of the Holy Ghost.

How wonderful and mysterious is the *Touch* of Jesus—the touching Him, and the being touched by Him. How vitally interesting are the records of these Divine touches in the four gospels. Virtue and power flowed from Him. "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole."

"Somebody hath touched Me," He said, "for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." This was when the multitude were thronging Him and crowding upon Him. One person *touched* Him, and healing life flowed into her like an electric stream and cured her.

There is a great mystery about touch—for good or evil.

I remember Capt. Hanson once saying that he believed *shaking hands* had a great deal to do with conversion, and I believe he was right. He valued it almost more than preaching.

Christ meant something when he promised His people that out of them should flow rivers of living water. It is difficult to say what power goes out of certain persons into others. But we have all of us experienced the magnetic power that is conveyed even in a look. An animal will quail before a man's look. Often it is possible to feel that we are being gazed at steadily even when we do not actually see the person.

It is most uncomfortable to look a bad person steadily in the face.

We feel it disagreeable for people to stare at us fixedly, or to fix their eyes on us while they are talking to us. In the same way if the eye *never* meets ours, but is averted, there is a kind of discomfort—something is missed.

These powers are not given us for nothing. They may be used for good or for evil. Bad people know

only too well how much influence is in the power of the eye, and of the hand.

The Bishop of London (Dr. Ingram) said to me lately that he was quite certain that the power wasted in sensuality by many people would if reserved and disciplined turn to great spiritual force in winning and blessing souls.

Do you ever meditate on the Trinity, and try to learn more of GOD?

I have felt for some time that my thoughts of GOD the Father—when I compared them with the four wonderful chapters (in St. John's Gospel) which contain Christ's last address and prayer before His betrayal—did not exactly fit in. In these chapters He reveals to us both the Father and the Holy Spirit as *Persons* Whom He loved. He speaks of the Father as One most dear to Him, and as One Who was as truly a *Person* to Him as Christ Himself is to us. (Yet the Three are One).

I had thought of GOD the Father as identical with GOD the universal, omnipresent Spirit. But I see now that it is truer to regard the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as each a manifestation of the universal GOD. This is what the first of our Thirty-nine Articles teaches. Perhaps you may think the difference is only very slight. But to me it means a good deal. For I could not give up the belief in GOD as the universal Spirit, and therefore formless and unlimited, and yet I need also to worship Him as a dear and tender Father Whom we can think of as a

Person, just as much as we think of Christ Himself. Whether GOD the Father is *ever* visible, who can say? Christ says, "*No man* has seen GOD at any time," but He does not say that He Himself has never seen Him—that no Spirit has ever seen Him, or will see Him. If you read carefully those four chapters (John xiv., xv., xvi., and xvii.) you will see that He speaks of His Father just as individually as we should speak of our earthly father.

I feel it is a great gain while we worship the universal and ever-blessed GOD to also know Him as separately manifested in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the more I consider it the more I feel how the Bible and the Prayer Book both confirm this view.

I am sure that meditating on GOD with prayer, and opening our minds to the Holy Spirit's influence is most important for all evangelists. Worship GOD. Worship Him in His manifestations as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *Think of GOD.*

The very thinking of the thought,  
Without or praise or prayer,  
Gives light to know, and life to do,  
And marvellous strength to bear

'Tis not His justice, or His power,  
Beauty, or blest abode,  
*But the mere unexpanded thought*  
*Of the Eternal GOD.*

Sweet thought ! lie closer to my heart,  
That I may feel thee near,  
As one who for his weapon feels  
In some nocturnal fear.

Sweet thought of GOD ! now do thy work  
As thou hast done before,  
Wake up, and bring me peace and joy,  
And life to love Him more.

In my next letter I should like to try and answer questions. And I am therefore asking any of you who have difficulties to write them down and to send them to me. The questions had better not be lengthy—just a few concise words on a post card. It is always very important to express what one has to say as shortly as possible. You will say that these letters set you a bad example of lengthiness, but I assure you I cut out of them almost every unnecessary word. Long letters are generally (but not always) a mistake.

I do not promise to answer every difficulty satisfactorily. *But I will do my best.* Do not send me things in print (or not more than a sentence or two).

The questions may relate to anything that troubles you. About science, or the Bible, or sin and suffering, and the ordering of the world. Or about the rules of our society, or about church matters, or difficulties of living peaceably and usefully with others.

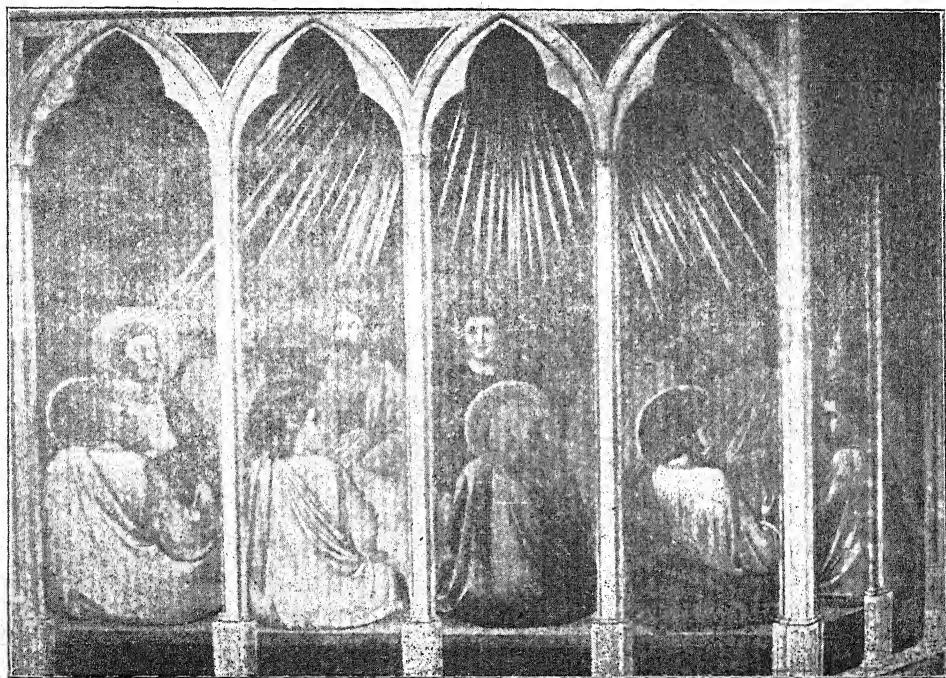
GOD bless you, dear Comrades.

Let us be closely joined together by sympathy,

work, and Christian love. Let us be kind and forbearing with people whom we are tempted to dislike. Let us rise early for prayer, Bible reading, and listening to God's voice.

Pray for us, as we do for you.

E.C.



*November, 1904.*

DEAR COMRADES,

GOD bless you all—Captains, Nurses, and Friends.

I thank you warmly for your letters. They draw us all more and more closely together, and they prove how real is our common Divine life.

I shall begin with answering some of the many questions, which, by my request, you ask me.

May GOD guide and direct me. Be sure to write if you find my answers insufficient or unsatisfactory. I have spent a good deal of happy care over them.

Some of you have asked if the expression in the July Letter, "CHRIST has saved the World" is justifiable scripturally. It is a good thing to look out the words in a concordance, for, as you know, the Bible is the one rule in such matters. If you do this you will find several passages, of which I give you two samples. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii. 47.) "This is indeed the CHRIST, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42).

I am very glad that such questions should be asked. And now we will come at once to the difficulties.

Question I.—"How can GOD be Almighty Love, and yet allow wretchedness and pain, and sin, and decay? And what can be said of Nature's law of prey?"



This is the greatest difficulty that exists for us all, I suppose, and the one above all others that presses for an answer.

By all means let us face it steadily, and not be afraid of it. It is now no difficulty to me.

I want to say chiefly three things about it.

First, that *the best final results can only be reached through conflict*. This will become, with a little thought, clear to us all. Great virtues such as self-sacrificing love, patience, courage, faith, forgiveness, are only called into being by an opposite evil or pain.

Think of it carefully, and you will see that if stagnation and lifelessness are to be avoided, then there must be trial and conflict. CHRIST Himself suffered, and fought, and thus He overcame, and was for ever perfected. So it is with all His followers.

Every great deed and happy attainment in the world's history has been brought about by conflict and trial.

Every martyrdom and every heroic action depends on evil or mischief to call it forth. Put evil and pain out of history and there would be a blank as to the highest kinds of virtue and goodness. We know this in our own lives. The best things we have won, and the things we should choose above all not to have missed, could never have happened but for the sorrow and pain and evil which occasioned them. And this is why we are bidden to "give thanks in everything."

Most people are tempted to say, "Ah, it is all very well talking, but I would far rather have evil and pain

away, and I would be satisfied with the good which I can have without them. For, as things are, the good is so much outweighed by the evil."

This is a natural thing to say, and I do not think that GOD wonders that it should be said, or that He is hard on those who say it under the stress of suffering. But for all that they make a mistake, and it is well for them that they cannot get their way.

St. Paul, however, certainly does not treat the difficulty lightly. He knew well what the evil and suffering of the world were, and his answer to the difficulty is: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed."

This answer came by inspiration and from a colossal faith. Evil, sorrow, and pain have their uses. The Kingdom of peace and glory comes *through* them. The trial of our faith is more precious than gold. The perfect beauty of our present CHRIST depends on His past pain and conflict. So the Bible tells us.

"Yes, that may be true for those who triumph, but how about those who do *not* triumph? Those who suffer without being either happy or good? How about those who die evil as well as wretched? What does all this waste mean?"

Comrades, the time will come when we shall know that there has been *no* waste. The present life is only a fraction of eternity. Who can tell how GOD will deal in the future with those who have apparently but not really suffered in vain?

"His righteousness standeth like the strong mountains. His judgments are like the great deep" (Ps. xxxvi.).

"That GOD is good sufficeth me."

It does seem hard that we should not know, but it is not really hard, for GOD knows best. He the universal, omnipresent Spirit, manifested as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, can be trusted with His creation.

Meanwhile He gives us our work to do, and part of that work, we are told, is to believe on Him, Whom He hath sent. CHRIST is our anchor, our salvation, and our hope. He knew the pain and evil of the world, but His faith in His Father never faltered. He knew that the glorious end would make all clear, the end when every enemy should be destroyed, and GOD be All in All.

"But it is a great stretch of faith to believe all this?" Yes, it is, but *is any other belief possible?* I know, of none. And this belief, taught us by the Bible, only needs patience to be proved. "Let patience have her perfect work."

I will tell you, not for the first time, a story which has been to me a godsend: "Long ago, in Italy, a goldsmith had to make a ring of pure gold, and of a most elaborate and beautiful pattern. He found he could not make it of pure gold, because the pure gold was too soft. Therefore he mixed alloy with the gold, and made an amalgam which was so hard that he was able to form it into the right pattern. The

ring was now right in form, but it was not pure gold. The next step was, by a chemical process, to get all the alloy out of the gold. This was done, and finally the ring became all gold, and of the right design."

The poor world now is like the gold ring when the alloy was mixed with it. And the alloy is now, in GOD'S way, being got rid of.

And here I must comment on what is not an answer to our question, but certainly bears on it. And that is the tendency with many people to exaggerate the trouble, and to under-rate the happiness of our lot in this world.

I find that there are many people who cannot bring themselves to believe that pain and trouble come from GOD. They believe that they come from Satan.

For myself, I believe that GOD ordains *all* things for His people. We sometimes need punishment and discipline, and as long as they remain I take them from GOD, either to be suffered or to be overcome. The difficulty is more apparent than real. It was Satan who deprived Job of his prosperity, but all the same Job truly said, "The LORD gave, the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the LORD."

Question II.—"What is to be understood and believed about the passages in Exodus which say that GOD hardened Pharoah's heart? And the passage in the forty-fifth of Isaiah, which runs, 'I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches, and secret places, that thou mayest know that I am the LORD. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I formed the

light, and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I am the LORD that doeth all these things?' While on the other hand, St. James, though he tells us to count it joy when we fall into temptations because through them we become perfect, yet nevertheless says, 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD, for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man?'"

My belief is that GOD is said to have hardened Pharoah's heart only in the same sense in which the hearts of Judas, Herod, and Pilate were hardened. The GOD Who is Love and Wisdom, makes Himself responsible for the entry into the world of what is called evil—a dark and bad force. By conflict with it, goodness and virtue are produced. Through the sin of Judas our salvation was brought about. Through the sin of Pharoah the victory of GOD'S people came to pass. If Pharoah's heart had not been hardened, the deliverance would not have been what it was, either for the future good of the people, or the manifestation of GOD.

In both cases, evil slowly and painfully worked out good. If Pharoah had been gentle and kind, the Israelites would have remained in Egypt. But his evil behaviour delivered GOD'S people, and precipitated his own death in the waters of the Red Sea. This death was doubtless the best thing that could happen to him. I wonder if he was amongst the spirits in prison to whom Christ preached 1,500 years later? Who can say whether he was or not?

Let us, then, frankly and boldly accept the certain fact that it was by the Will of GOD that evil was allowed to do its work in the world, and that, therefore, Pharoah's heart was hardened, and Judas's treachery consummated. Can we think of a better way, in either case, of bringing about salvation?

The use of evil is to be fought and conquered—perhaps we shall find it easier to understand if we recall our trespasses. We know and feel that we have been to blame whenever we have sinned, and we know that we need not have sinned. And thus it was with Pharoah. But we also know that, as David says, we were conceived and born in sin, and that for loving and wise purposes GOD allowed us to be so born.

Again I want to insist on the importance of facing difficulties, and not running away from them. If we run away from them, they have, so far, conquered us, and we afterwards feel that there are things we dare not look at lest we fall from our standing.

I do not mean that when we face them we can immediately conquer them. Difficulties are not meant to be overcome too easily. Some of them will probably remain unsolved till we die, but all the same we can face them, and say, "I know that this will be explained, and that some time I shall know the how and why of all these puzzles. The truth is better than the best which I can imagine. GOD is our GOD, and He is perfect in goodness, in wisdom, and beauty.

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,  
*Let me hide myself in Thee.*"

If the character and truth of a dear and trusted friend is attacked by an enemy with some plausible falsehood, we do not let our trust in our friend be undermined. We may not know what explanation there is, nor do we ignore the attack, but we say to ourselves, "I know and trust my friend. I have proved him to be true and good; I shall not doubt him because the accusation seems well founded. I *know* it can be explained, for it is almost impossible that he should have been mean, or cruel, or untruthful. As I have opportunity I will look into the matter, but I have no fear as to the result."

Our confidence, however, in men or women cannot be absolute on all points, for human nature may fail. But in GOD our confidence *is absolute*, for He is the sum of perfection—Love, Light, and Life. One thing is certain, that in all things GOD'S judgments will at last be made manifest," and all creation will praise Him.

Question III.—"What is the explanation of CHRIST saying that He would be three days and three nights in the tomb, when He was there only Friday and Saturday nights, and part of Friday and Sunday, and all day on Saturday?"

This question has puzzled me. But last evening I got the answer from Mr. George Reynolds.

The Jewish day counts from 6 p.m.

So, as CHRIST was in the tomb on Friday afternoon, He was there for part of that day and part of that night (till 6 p.m.). He was there all day and all night on Saturday, and he was there from six o'clock

p.m. on what we call Saturday evening, but what they reckon Sunday night, and for the beginning of Sunday morning.

I consider that this is a perfectly satisfactory answer to a difficult question.

Question IV.—Is the story of the Creation to be taken literally?"

Anyone who likes may take it literally. For myself I feel that the literal truth about many things is by no means the deepest truth, and I like to think of the account given us as an inspired and absolutely true poem, but true in the sense that (for instance) the parables of the ten virgins, and of Dives and Lazarus, are true. Probably the Book of Job is true in this sense. How true is Shakespeare's story of "Hamlet," and how little it matters to us whether it actually happened. Perhaps it did, but in any case we are right to appeal to it as true in the best and highest sense. Some people seem to think that poems cannot be true. But that is a great mistake. Feel free, then, in such matters.

Question V.—"Did Elijah really ascend to Heaven in a chariot?"

I myself believe that he was actually seen to ascend in glory. So also was CHRIST, though He is still with us and in us. Heaven, too, is within us. The place "at the right hand of GOD" may be everywhere, for there is no place where GOD is not. I often wonder that there is so much difficulty in crediting the miracles of the Bible. Their strangeness



is only because we do not know how they were done. The King of Dahomey said very naturally that it was impossible that water should ever be solid. He had never seen ice ; but we know that ice is no miracle.

Question VI.—“Is it not strange that there are not words of Christ recorded which would make impossible the controversies about such matters as Baptism and Communion?”

No. Because it is not well for us to have no difficulties to ponder. GOD could have made many things perfectly plain, including those things which we are now discussing. But our religion is not a cut and dried thing, and we may be very thankful that there are matters left for us to exercise our minds, and souls, and faith about. I feel sure it is better that many things should be left open, and, in a certain way, undecided.

Question VII —“Is it really meant that if we are smitten on one cheek we are to turn the other?”

I do not believe anyone has ever obeyed these commands of our LORD literally without finding blessing to his soul and life in doing so. But probably our LORD'S intention was to lay down a *principle* of non-retaliation, and of bearing and forbearing with those who behave badly towards us. Whenever I have put His Words in practice I have found great benefit from doing so. When CHRIST spoke, He was seldom what we call *cautious*.

Question VIII.—“How are we to understand the passages about binding and loosing, and forgiving and

retaining sins—powers which our LORD gave to His disciples? ”

The passages respecting this matter are in three chapters—Luke xvi. and xviii., and John xx. The difficulties would be insurmountable if CHRIST had said, “I am going to confer on you and the clergy a miraculous power, gained by the laying on of My Hands. It will enable you to bind and loose, and to forgive or retain everybody’s sins. And this power shall continue through all generations in those on whom you choose to lay your hands.”

There are, I believe, some people who believe that this was what CHRIST meant. It would, of course, be gratifying in a certain way to the clergy to believe that they possessed this singular power, and might exercise it whenever they choose. Who would not be a clergyman if he was to have the power of doing away with everybody’s sin if he liked to do so ! But is there the slightest hint that CHRIST had such an idea in His mind ? No ! In Matthew xvi. He tells St. Peter that he shall have the keys of heaven and hell, and that His Church would be built on the rock, and that what he bound or loosed on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven.

But in the 18th chapter and the 18th verse, in speaking to His disciples or followers, He repeats exactly the same words about their binding and loosing, and He gives them the same power. In the 20th of John He comes to His disciples (Thomas not being with them) and breathes on them, and bids

them receive the Holy Ghost, and tells them that sins are to be remitted by them. This is all that the Bible tells us on the subject, but later on we find that the disciples, including St. Paul, exercised this power.

To my mind, there is no difficulty here if we believe just what the Scriptures say, and no more. St. Peter and the disciples had the unspeakable privilege of declaring that GOD pardons and absolves all those who truly repent (as our Prayer Book says). But was this gift of forgiving confined to those to whom He spoke? Is there a hint of such a reservation? No! still less is there a hint that the Apostles *alone* possessed it, and might convey it to any man on whom they choose to lay their hands. What a curious idea that would be! Surely it is obvious that everyone, including women and children, may declare the gospel that through CHRIST'S death and life every faithful, repentant sinner is forgiven. We *all* declare it, in the creeds and elsewhere. It is the great fact of Christianity. Those who repent and believe are forgiven. It is, however, the special business of the clergy to declare this *officially*. May they do it faithfully, as so many of them do. Does anyone suppose that CHRIST meant that sins could be absolved by anyone *without* the repentance of the sinner, or retained when there *was* repentance?

The answer to such difficulties is obtained by looking them in the face, and rejecting anything that is preposterous and unscriptural.

There is, of course, no harm (but good) in a person's

wishing to hear authoritatively from a clergyman that sins are forgiven and absolved, as soon as they are confessed and repented of. By all means let them hear it as often as they like, and in any fashion that they prefer. If they prefer to hear it stated by even quite a young and not specially religious clergyman, there ought to be no harm in gratifying their desire.

Those who are exercised about the matter should read the fine treatise on "the Christian Ministry," by that splendid Christian and mighty scholar, Bishop Lightfoot, of Durham. His dissertation on the subject is concise and not long. It is published with his work on the Epistle to the Philippians. (Get the first edition, as I think some one has altered the passage since he died).

Question IX.—"Of what does the Church consist?"

The spiritual Church consists of all who have the CHRIST life in them. But our Church of England consists of all baptised members who belong to it. The Prayer Book defines the Church as "the blessed company of all faithful people." See also the 19th Article.

Question X.—"Christ said that except a man was born of water and of the Spirit he could not enter into the Kingdom of GOD. Must holy Quakers and Salvation Army people then be outside? For they are not baptized. Are they worse off than those who have been baptized and yet are as wicked as possible?"

I admit that baptism is a difficult subject to define in all its aspects, but it is not difficult to obey our

LORD'S clear command to be baptized. And, having done this, we may be content to wait for a full light as to the benefits it conveys. GOD uses water, bread, and wine, for communicating to His people spiritual blessings. Who can say that if water is an essential for conveying certain graces, that Quakers and others may not receive them *unconsciously* through water, as unconsciously as infants do when they are baptized? This is one of the many subjects about which it does not worry me to be in doubt.

Question XI.—“Whom did Cain marry?”

I am rather ashamed to answer this, because I think it is an unnecessary question; but it is often asked. Of course, Cain and Seth married their sisters if there was no one else to marry. There was no law against it in those times, and in Persia I believe it is still a common practice, though entirely contrary to Christian laws. But I do not see any difficulty as to whom Cain married.

Question XII.—“What is meant by the sons of GOD marrying the daughters of men?”

This happened so long ago, and the text is so obscure, that it is impossible to answer certainly; but the matter can scarcely be called a difficulty. The general idea is (and I do not see why it should not be true) that the sons of GOD were angels (good or bad) who became incarnate, and who married women. No one can positively say whether this was the case. There are plenty of such stories in other religions.

Question XIII.—“Have animals got souls?”

We cannot tell for certain, but I should think myself that they *have*. We are told of horses in heaven, and we are told of the "spirits of beasts that go downwards." Many animals are good, much better than many men and women, and they often suffer so much that it seems a natural, and not an unscriptural hope that in love and fairness they have souls that can be blessed and saved. But this is a subject on which all may have their own opinions.

Question XIV.—"Is there progress and growth and development for souls in heaven?"

I think we may certainly conclude that there is. I, myself, have no doubt on the subject, and will speak of it again presently.

Question XV.—"Is it well to try and *imitate* others to whom we look up?"

It is a good thing, I suppose, while we are young (and later, too), to wish and try to be like people whom we look up to as a better sort than ourselves—wiser, holier, cleverer, and more useful. And we probably do become *something like them* by wishing to be so. But a time comes when this kind of ambition partly falls away from us, and, in a sense, we humbly learn to be content with such things as we have. We cannot be exactly like those we have looked up to. We can only be ourselves, with perhaps second-rate attributes. We find we must be content to be kind, instead of magnanimous; reliable instead of heroic; useful instead of powerful. All this would once have been a bitter pill to swallow, but time takes away its

bitterness, and our friends, at all events, are kindly content to have us as we are.

CHRIST is our safest example, and as He is *our life* we may reasonably hope to get more and more like Him, though we lag dreadfully!

The Bible tells us wonderful things as to this gradual assimilation to our Head—especially in the exalted and mysterious epistle to the Ephesians.

My advice is to seek and store in our hearts and minds as many high and beautiful thoughts and desires as possible. Feed on what is good and admirable. Even if we forget, it has done us good; like the dinners which we ate long ago and have forgotten all about, though they helped to make us strong and capable.

Question XVI.—“What constitutes people *holy*? Is holiness the same as goodness? Are the holiest people the best and the most useful?”

These are not such easy questions to answer as might appear. Let them be faced squarely and honestly, for there are very subtle evils which have to be guarded against by those who are running the Christian race.

What is generally *meant* by holiness is something more than mere goodness and usefulness. The real thing has a beautiful perfume of its own. It is tranquil, and cannot be attained without quietness of spirit. Presently we will try to speak of it with hope and desire

It has, however, its own dangers. Everybody who

has been to Holiness Conferences knows that there is a type of holiness which does not altogether commend itself. This kind is unctuous, and probably the same faults which may make a holiness man unctuous, might make him over ecclesiastical if he had happened to be an advanced High Churchman, lay or clerical. In both cases it is self that subtly intrudes and half spoils. If he were not religious he would very likely wear his hair long! Different types of people have different dangers.

It all means that natural faults are apt to reappear in those who are true children of God.

Such a man would probably drop the particular manner which we dislike when he was alone with his family, and would talk unreservedly to them in a natural tone of voice.

There is a certain goodness, or self-complacency, about some people which repels, and we get an idea of what Solomon meant when he warned us not to be "righteous overmuch." No one *can* be righteous overmuch in the true sense, but the manner of it may be overdone.

In order to help me to answer the above question I have made three columns of certain people's names.

First, those who are manifestly extra good and useful, but not "holy" in manner.

Second, those who are good, useful, and evidently holy also.

Third, those who are holy, and yet not quite satisfactory.



I think it is best to be in the second column, and yet I would wish also to be like two or three of the people in the first column. Two of these are almost faultless people of great influence, and like CHRIST in character. But they have not got the manner of holiness about them.

All the people in the last column are good, but one of them is disagreeable, and judges harshly. Another is not entirely free from snobbishness, and sometimes is a little greedy. One is mean. Another is charming and brave, but tactless, narrow-minded, and not intelligent. But they all impress one as holy.

I suppose we all feel that St. John gives us a greater feeling of holiness than St. Paul and St. Peter, but they were all three pre-eminent in goodness. It seems strange that holy people should not always be easily loved and enjoyed.

One sees in CHRIST the two sides—the greatest tranquility and holiness, and also the most untiring, active benevolence, with considerable fighting powers.

Perhaps you will think that the above criticisms are scarcely justifiable. But I think they *are*, and I do not think they will deter anyone from desiring the real, unadulterated Christ-like holiness. The faults come of being holy without being quite holy enough.

Those who are holy in the best way, impress us as living fearlessly in the conscious Presence of GOD.

They may be full of business and hard work, and they may be quite playful and merry. A laugh is a fine healthy thing. But the fact of CHRIST within and

CHRIST without is evident to all. They have *inspiration* about them and unmistakable *power*. They do not make rules of cautious behaviour (though rules are sometimes excellent things), but they are so *dwelt in* by CHRIST that they can afford to be natural. They are invariably humble, but they would never dream of saying that they are humble. They are not self-conscious, and not apt to talk unnecessarily about themselves or their doings. There is a kind of illumination about them, a modest joy, which is the mark of their being filled with the Holy Ghost.

Such people are rare, but probably we know *some* to whom this description applies—dear, holy people, who are *illuminated*.

But mostly we have to put up with those who are on lower heights—good people, who work hard, and who want to be better than they are. “Blameless” people are not always the best. We would rather have faulty great souls that are noble, effective, and powerful, than small souls, who effect little, but with whom faults are not visible.

Let us desire earnestly the best gifts—those which come from the closest and most uninterrupted walk with GOD. In answer, then, to the questions, I would say that the *very best* people are the holiest, and that each one of us must “follow holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD.” Heb. xii 14.

Let us seek it with all our hearts, and not for one moment be satisfied without it.

Let us seek it by “patient continuance in well-doing.”

But even beyond this let us seek it by special prayer, by hungering and thirsting after it, and by faith in its Giver.

If we win it even in a small degree, let us beware of the least symptom of "goodness" or self-complacency; and let the spirit of judging or condemning others be carefully disciplined. Let us tremble if we find that we are not esteeming others better than ourselves. May we all be not only *true* Christians, but *beautiful* Christians.

And especially let us never condemn those who have on them GOD'S seal of goodness, and yet who are not in agreement and full sympathy with us. Those who "do His Works shall know His doctrine," sooner or later. Meanwhile we may, without judging or scolding, "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

Someone asks, "Why do you want to be holy? Is it not enough to be good and useful?"

No, it is not enough.

I want to be holy for several reasons.

First (and I wish that this were *not* the first reason, for it is a selfish reason), because I am afraid to die unless I am holy, for "none without holiness shall see the LORD." I have no fear of being "lost," because the matter of salvation is entirely settled by the death and resurrection of CHRIST. But beyond this salvation there is sanctification needed, and it is difficult to say what will be the state of those who die *saved*, but

*not holy.* What discipline, what long delay, will be needed? The Bible tells us enough to make us anxious. What did St. Paul mean by fearing that even he might be a castaway, though he was saved from hell? All will be ordered fairly, rightly, and lovingly; but careless, sinful Christians have no Scriptural ground for believing that as soon as they die they will find themselves in what they call "glory." I have tried in some of the short stories in my new book, "Damien and others," to hint at what seem to me possibilities.

You will find the danger indicated hundreds of times in the Bible and in other religious books. If you have a "Pilgrim's Progress," read Christiana's last farewell to her companions.

But a better reason for being holy is that our beloved LORD JESUS CHRIST longs that we should be holy, and cannot be satisfied without it. How this desire breathes all through His words before His betrayal! What chapters *those five* are!

Moreover, those who desire to be useful and to benefit their generation may know with certainty that this can be done *far* the best by those who are truly holy—illuminated by GOD.

I have often said it to you, and I say it again with plenty of blame to myself, that many of us fail sadly in the matter of holiness, because we do not systematically keep sufficient quiet time for solitary communion with GOD, and for listening to the voice of the Holy "Spirit." The day that is all lived in a rush must

nearly always be half a failure. Some of us scarcely give GOD the opportunity of speaking quietly to us unless He lays us aside on a bed of sickness (and sickness often makes the soul so torpid that it is by no means the best time for working out such problems.)

Work may itself be a positive hindrance if it leaves us no time for devotion.

Question XVII.—“How do we account for the difference in the genealogies of Christ given us by St. Matthew and St. Luke?”

This is a very interesting subject, and is treated at length in a book I warmly recommend, “The Differences of the Four Gospels,” by Andrew Jukes. One of the genealogies is believed to be Mary’s, and the other Joseph’s. One starts from Adam, “the Son of GOD,” the other from Abraham, and they represent two different aspects of CHRIST. Mary and Joseph are said to have been cousins. If space permitted I would write at length about it.

Question XVIII.—“How did evil begin?”

I cannot answer this question, for as the Bible is silent on the subject I have no means of knowing. But I have shown, in answer to the first question, that we may be thankful that evil was allowed to enter in order that greater good may come to pass.

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It will encourage you to read the following extract from a letter to our Pioneer officers:

“You will remember how I found CHRIST on Blackpool sands on Sunday, August 21st. Up to then

I was a wretched man, with neither home nor food; in fact I was despised and rejected by all. But now, thank GOD, I have not only been reconciled to my wife and friends, but I have found a loving Saviour; and during the time that I have known Him He has been my greatest friend and comfort, and day by day I love Him more and more. My wife joins me in wishing you every success."

My letter is long, and I must close it. The last letter was, perhaps, too much about Church Army technicalities. This may have the opposite fault! If so, forgive, and pray that it may be blessed to those who need it—and now, farewell, God bless you!

E.C.



*January, 1905.*

DEAR COMRADES,

May the New Year's Dawn bring you great and happy gifts from your Father—love, joy, peace, and increasing power to win souls for your LORD.

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I am half afraid that some of you will not care much for the New Year's pictures enclosed, though I myself particularly value them. The dim, blurred, and scarred head of CHRIST has a most curious history.

The Death and Resurrection picture, by Blake, has long been a great favourite of mine. Earthly things live their day, and decline, and die ; but from them new and better life may arise. So may it be with you and me and our work.

One of the things that I chiefly desire for you is that you should be happy. This is what GOD, your Creator and Father, desires. He made us to be happy, and I believe that He grieves when our happiness is delayed. Sometimes it *has* to be delayed by Almighty Love, else it would not be of the pure and best quality. But happiness is the normal and best state. I believe, however, that many people lose it because they do not *recognise* it. Satan has continued lying to us as he lied to Eve, persuading us



that GOD does not give us what is best, and does not desire our greatest good. He is often believed; and the consequence is that men and women, blessed daily with life, and power, and love, and immortality, and with all kinds of good and useful things—food, raiment, sleep, work, rest, laughter, friendship, the Bible, and the opportunities of blessing others, and being blessed—are yet persuaded half their time into being grumblers. Think of this carefully, and learn the true wisdom.

There is plenty of evil and sorrow in the world; but it is there to be conquered by faith. The victory is in our power. The older I get the more my eyes open to the fact that (if we will only trust God) the world is run on lines of love and wisdom, and ought to be a happy experience.

For most of us it is true that if we are convinced that we are happy, and say so, we *are* happy; and that the measure of sadness which we all endure sometimes—trouble, sickness, injustice, and failing powers—is a blessing and not a curse.

Let us now consider for our New Year's lesson

#### THE 104TH PSALM.

We are all so fond of David's 103rd Psalm that the Psalm which follows it is almost at a disadvantage.

Yet it is scarcely inferior in beauty and value.

The 103rd Psalm is largely about ourselves and GOD'S gracious dealings with us as sinners; and this naturally makes it specially interesting to us. Its

final burst of praise is called forth by His forgiveness and His tender care over us. He has pitied, and forgiven, and healed, and saved us, therefore let men and angels praise and love Him. I call it the "Forget-me-not Psalm."

The note of praise is quite different in the 104th Psalm. It does not touch us so much as individual men and women. There is nothing about anxiety, and forgiveness, and salvation. These matters are happily settled, and the soul is at peace and "at leisure from itself." The attention is fixed only on the LORD in worship and delight. The writer has learned *how to love Him freely*, and to rejoice in Him. It may be reckoned a broad church psalm. It considers GOD, and its "meditation of Him is sweet."

The man who wrote it loved nature, and rejoiced to know that it was *GOD'S nature*. He had learned to look on it in a way that made it a source of love to GOD and intimacy with Him.

What a blessing it is to have attained to this state of mind! And how rare it is.

How few people have learned the habit of recognising the heart and taste of GOD in every good thing which they love and admire!

Why are sunsets glorious? Why are trees lovely in their changing tints? Why is grass green? and why are skies blue? Because the taste of GOD is perfect. Therefore He made the grass and the sky not to be dingy grey or dingy brown, but gave the one a green like emeralds, and to the other a blue

better than sapphires. His sense of beauty made the glowing ruby and the diamond and the glistening pearl. Alas! that they should ever be used for vanity and cupidity.

Those who neglect to learn "the invisible things of GOD" from creation, are sad losers (Romans i. 20.) But those who study them humbly and faithfully, break out sooner or later into such words as those which are the moral of our 104th Psalm:

"I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live. I will sing praise to my GOD while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet. I will be glad in the LORD."

To the writer of the 104th Psalm nothing is common or unclean. Wild asses, lions, creeping things—even Leviathan himself—have their due place in the heart of GOD. He made them all, and cares for them all, and from Him they feed and quench their thirst. They are not outsiders. They all come under the law of Love.

The Psalm takes affectionate count of all, and makes me think of Stevenson's lines:

"The world is so full of a number of things,  
That we all ought to be as happy as kings!"

The normal system of GOD is what the Psalmist delights in. Here is the long list of what moves his heart to thankful joy: Light, darkness, sky, clouds, wind, fire, sea, mountains, thunder, springs, hills, beasts, wild asses, birds and their nests, singing birds, storks, grass, herbs, wine, oil, bread, trees, cedars,

goats, conies, rocks, moon, sun, forest beasts, lions, man, work, sea creatures, ships, leviathan, vicissitudes, breath, death, and the Spirit of GOD. All these things He praises GOD for. I should have added *flowers*, for they have, all my life, been to me a source of grace, and among my chief delights. If you live in the country, do you ever send flowers to town friends, rich or poor? It is well worth doing, especially if you send *buds* and notice what kinds live a longish time in water—daisies, poppy buds, heath, bog asphodel, &c. One greatly-valued friend sends me flowers every week, and I feel grateful and delighted with her and with them many times a day.

What gainers we should be if we cultivated the habit of praise for all such blessings as these. There are times when our powers of *prayer* seem for the moment spent. It would be well if we then began to thank and praise and worship. We Church Army people know how glad we are if people give us a few thanks and a little praise. And how often—after working hard—we get neither? Let us remember that the GOD of love, too, cares for praise and for joyful gratitude. His heart is the biggest heart of all, and, perhaps, the easiest to grieve. Let us remember how CHRIST felt about the leper who was grateful, and the lepers who were *not*. I believe the time is coming when some of us will be more sorry and ashamed of ourselves for our blind and careless neglect to be thankful, than even for our short-comings in prayer.

Some of us are even worse than unthankful, for we actually grumble at the very best things that GOD gives us. Something crosses our plans and wishes, and instead of recognizing GOD'S providence as the best and wisest thing, we become petulant and cross. And even when—months or years afterwards—we find out how and why His dispensation has benefited us, we still forget to thank Him, and reckon it as a tardy amends for the vexation we have suffered.

Surely we ought to have learned this even in such matters as bereavements. Is not GOD a better judge than we are, of when it is best for people to die? Can we tell what the issues of death are? And what sorrow or pain, or disgrace, or failure, would be in store if life were prolonged? or what happiness and service in the hidden life would be missed if our beloved ones did not, when the right time came, pass within the veil? It is very certain that GOD knows what is best. We should bungle sadly, even if we had the ordering of the much abused weather. And how much more in the greater things of life and death. The Psalms are full of thankfulness. In the beautiful 107th Psalm the unknown author is moved to a sort of passionate desire that GOD should be thanked; and again, and again, and again he breaks out into the exclamation—half joyful and half regretful:

“Oh, that men would therefore praise the LORD for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men!”

Good manners should always distinguish the

Christian man and woman; and careless, ungrateful people are guilty of the worst manners of all. St. Paul, who was an expert in courtesy, makes a special point of how GOD had for forty years "suffered the manners" of the Israelites in the wilderness. They certainly did behave very badly; but not worse than many of us behave.

I remember several times in my life when I have behaved crossly, though the very best thing was happening to me. Twice an injury done me by a friend has brought about two of the greatest blessings I ever enjoyed. Two or three times illness and pain have turned out to be just what I needed. Once I was extremely annoyed because a big Evangelistic hall that I wanted to buy could not be obtained. If I had got it, perhaps I should have worked only at it, and never been a secretary of the Church Army.

So let us always bear in mind the wisdom of thanking and praising GOD.

The Psalm ends with the desire that evil may cease, and then the soul once more blesses the LORD and calls on all to praise him.

I hope and believe, dear comrades, that you and I and all of us, are working day by day to bring about this result. What work for man or woman can be so happy as the showing CHRIST the Saviour to the world He died to save.

Already He has given to us seals of this ministry. May we hold it fast, and not be inveigled away from it by the world, the flesh, or the devil. Nor even by

the more respectable kinds of ambition and desire to rise in the world.

GOD bless and guide each one of us in the path He has laid out for us. I had an interesting talk with Mrs. H. W. Smith last week (whose portrait you know in the middle of my Conference picture in the C.A. study). She said, "I am past seventy, and I find now that the prayer that suits me best on *all* occasions is 'Thy will be done.' I use it continually, and *it does for everything.*"

I am now going to answer some more questions in continuation of the eighteen queries in the November Letter.

Question XIX.—"Can we believe that suffering is fairly apportioned in this life? Is it not true that people who are exceptionally good, sometimes suffer most severely, while careless, godless people have health and prosperity? Of course, we must accept Providential dispensations, whether we like them or not, but would it not be a comfort to understand a little of their reason?"

These are real difficulties. How severely David felt them! I do not suppose that I can answer them completely, but the following considerations will help us, and may be sufficient. First, I think it will be found that light comes if we consider *individual cases* of apparently unjust suffering that we know of. We shall be wrong if we theorize on them *in the mass*. I am frequently astonished at the patience and heavenly wisdom of great sufferers. How seldom they complain!

Almost everyone notices this. I have never known a great sufferer who was a great grumbler. I do not say there *is not one*. But the grumblers are more often well-to-do people, who grumble as a luxury. GOD often lets His real sufferers know the secret and value of their pain, and comforts them accordingly.

What is the use of suffering? Why is it precious? Can none be perfected without it? Why must every sacrifice be salted with fire, as CHRIST tells us? What are GOD'S laws about it?

For my part, I believe that suffering is of inestimable value to those who suffer, and probably to those who look on. Gold cannot be purified without fire. Wooden vessels may be cleansed by water, but the most valuable things need fire. And so it is with souls, sooner or later. Blessed is the soul who submits cheerfully, and who is able, even in pain, to give thanks.

I think the normal rule of human life seems to be hope, happiness, work and play (with a certain amount of pain) for those who live industriously and well. But as our life draws towards its close, suffering—mild or sharp—generally draws nearer, and abides for longer spells. Most of us need to be made less in love with this poor world. We are grateful to it for all the joys and all the happy work it has given us; but the time comes when we have had our earthly day, and when we would not have it again. Then we look for the Heavenly City, whose Builder and Maker is GOD. A new life is coming to us, and we are



willing to be emptied and humbled if GOD will. All was good in its time, and our hearts and minds are stirred with grateful memories. People who have been self-indulgent, and greedy, and proud, often have to suffer a good deal in their old age. But those who have lived humbly and unselfishly often fade away as sweetly as a rose that sheds its petals on the earth and is as lovely in dying as in living.

Question XX.—“Do we remember in the next life what we learn and know here?”

I should like to answer “Yes,” to this question, on two grounds: the *Scriptural* ground, and the ground of *probability*.

The Bible certainly assumes, and also declares, that memory remains after death. And Christians are partakers of CHRIST'S own life, and are one with Him; so if *He* remembers (as He certainly does), then we also must remember.

In the story of Dives and Lazarus, Abraham bids the rich man “remember” just how he and Lazarus had lived on earth. All was evidently clear to Dives about himself, and Lazarus, and his four brothers. The story is a *parable*, but CHRIST would certainly not have spoken thus if He had not known that there would be memory in the next life. Besides this, in His teaching as to judgment and the life after death, He tells us that even *idle words* will be remembered, as well as all kind actions, and all neglects and shortcomings.

We are told, too, that we are in the presence of a

great company of just men made perfect, and that they watch our warfare here. The song of Heaven is the old story of the Lamb slain. Moses and Elijah conversed with CHRIST about His coming Passion and death at Jerusalem; and in the Old Testament we read how Samuel, when he appeared as a ghost to Saul, knew all about him, and remembered what had happened. Many times we are told that the Scriptures themselves last for ever; so it is happily plain that we are to have our Bibles in Heaven.

My own belief is that the normal laws of memory are continued in Heaven. Here we remember many things vividly, but other matters fade away and are forgotten. And, thanks be to GOD, happy things are generally remembered better than wretched things. How easily we recall beautiful sights and dear people; and how easily we forget discomforts of fatigue and distress. I have travelled a good deal, and I find I remember the splendours of mountains, and rivers, and meadows, and skies, and that I forget fatigue, uncomfortableness, tiresome insects, and vexing people, unless there is some humorous or satisfactory reason for remembering them.

We are told that there is such a thing as GOD *forgetting*. (Jeremiah xxxi. 34: "I will remember their sins no more." This is twice quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews.) He wipes away, and "forgets and forgives" our sins. This seems wonderful. But do not the best people follow His example? Is it not a horrid fault for people to remember for years bad

things about their friends, or even their enemies? It is almost devilish.

What I hope and expect is, that in the next life we shall all *finally* remember those things that are worth remembering, and no more. I believe it will be like a beautiful story or poem, and we shall all be so humble and true that we shall be willing that faults of ours should be remembered if they have brought about virtues and beauties in the history of humanity.

I remember once doing a decidedly mean thing, when the other person behaved nobly. I feel sure that in the next life I should not mind anybody knowing all about it. St. Peter will be glad that his fall should be known, as it brought out the loveliness of CHRIST'S forgiveness, and no one will love St. Peter less for his fall thousands of years before. As far as past naughtiness goes, we shall all seem "much of a muchness," I daresay.

I wish I could tell you if in the next world we shall remember, and still enjoy, the beauty of nature which delights us here—the flowers, the birds, the seasons, and all that we feel has come forth from the mind of GOD; but I suppose that this is one of the things we must leave undecided. My own belief is that nothing will be lost that is worth keeping.

Question XXI.—"Ought we to allow ourselves to be suspicious of Clergy who seem to be leading their congregations to the Church of Rome?"

This is a painful question to answer, but it has to be faced. As far as I know, we have not one Vicar

employing our Officers who deserves to be suspected of Romanising. It is quite true, however, that our Bishops *are* alive to the fact that there is a certain set of men who are definitely Romanising, and it is a sorrow and shame that it should be the case. *All* loyal members of our Church—clergy and laity—are anxious to oppose them. I would *rather* believe that such men are actually Roman Catholics at present, and therefore working for the Church to which they belong, than that they are false members of our own Church.

This morning I have been painfully studying some manuals prepared chiefly for children and young people. I have eight before me. All are anonymous, and it is impossible to read them without astonishment and indignation. In one of them the sections end again and again with the words: "We glorify thee, Oh, Mother of GOD," and it begins thus: "Holy Virgin, Mother of our LORD, good angels, Holy Patron Saints, pray for us and with us, to GOD. Oh, GOD, receive the prayers of Thy saints, and grant that *through their intercessions* we may be raised in a glorious resurrection. We glorify Thee, Oh, Mother of GOD."

One book which is called "Catholic Devotions for Young People," I thought must be written for Roman Catholics. But I find it is *not*. "Hail, Holy Queen—our life, our sweetness, and our hope, all hail. To Thee we cry. Turn, thou, most gracious advocate, thy merciful eye towards us. Queen of the Holy

Rosary, pray for us." "Love me, O dear and sweet child JESUS. Thou sittest smiling in the glory of Thy ALMIGHTY FATHER for ever and ever. . . ." "See the little Baby's arms stretched out towards you. Kneel with Mary beside His Crib. He shivers in the cold. . . ."

Is CHRIST then a BABY? And only present when the Sacrament is consecrated? Or is He the GOD Man always, and *everywhere* present with us? . . .

"The consecration is now very near; in a few moments JESUS Himself will be present on the Altar. After the words of Consecration, the bread and wine are really *changed* into the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST, though they still look and taste and feel the same. JESUS Himself is hidden there. . . .

"Mass. This is the best name because none but Catholics use it. Low Mass is *said* without music, incense, &c. High Mass is Mass sung with music, incense, and grander ceremonies. When you receive Holy Communion do so at a Low Mass, because a High Mass is generally late in the morning, and we must *always* receive *fasting*. There is no exception whatever to this rule except in the case of approaching death."

The above extracts are all from Church of England books which I have now before me.

Our indignation, of course, very much depends on whether we are ourselves convinced that the Church of Rome, though containing many true saints, would be a disastrous Church for England. As it claims

infallibility, it results in *complete slavery* of thought ; and we know what that means in countries like Spain, Italy, and Ireland. The system of selecting thousands of boys of eight years of age for the compulsory celibate life of a priest, *must* lead to immorality and vice.

Romanising attacks are now largely directed at children. They are taught to care for images, to pray to the Virgin, and to various saints and angels. And the practices which Englishmen have fought against with their lives are thus made familiar and acceptable to those who in a few years will be men and women.

One sad feature of this movement is that in certain country parishes it deprives the working-classes of the Church services which they love, and have been brought up to love. A different style of thing is substituted, and there is no power of protesting.

The Church Army is, you know, a non-party Society. Its members may be High, Low, or Broad. But the teachings of the above extracts are, *Roman*. We belong to the Church of England, and by GOD'S grace we will be loyal to her.

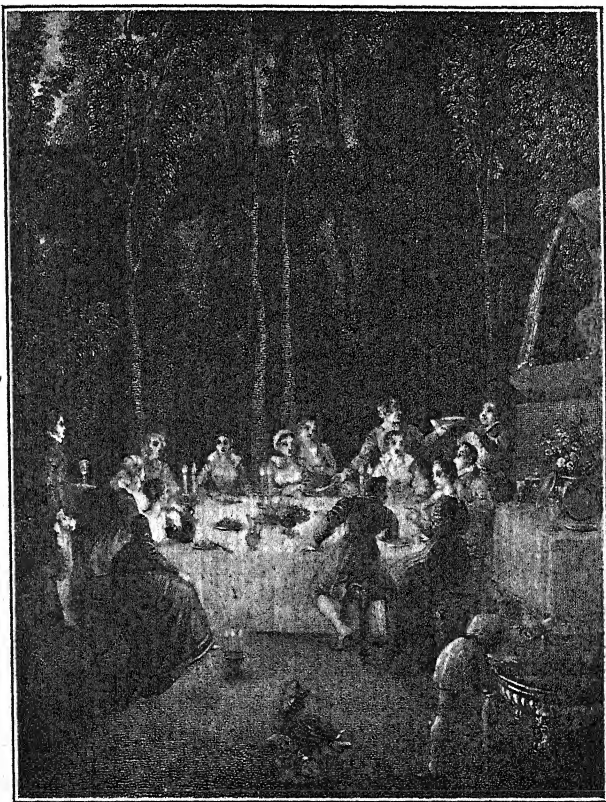
I sent all our officers some time ago a reprint of a magnificent charge of the late Archbishop (Temple) of Canterbury. We are in exact accord with it. I wish I could also find, to send you, an utterance on the matter by our late Archbishop Benson.

I have hesitated to write about the matter to you, for we are not—and do not intend to be—controversialists ; and I do not believe that this danger touches

the Church Army directly. But our line with you is always one of simple frankness, and I feel it is due to you not to entirely ignore a national danger.

May GOD guide us in this and in all other matters.

E.C.



*March, 1905.*

DEAR COMRADES,

I do not know that we have ever had a happier time in the Church Army than just now, though there has been much hard work, falling especially on Mr. Carlile, in the interests of the unemployed. The King and Queen's generous kindness and personal sympathy have been a real help, and I am specially delighted at the large money gift from that noble man, Mr. Charles Booth, the great statistician. Our staff are happy and rejoicing, and all goes well, though, of course, there are often troubles to make us all watchful and sorrowful.

And now I want to tell you that I have been in South Wales, to see something of the wonderful Revival, for you will like to know what Headquarters think about it. We do, indeed, desire that it may reach every corps in our Society, and there are clear signs of its coming eastwards.

The night before last I spent with Capt. Locke, at Aberbeeg, a country town inhabited by miners. He has had about sixty conversions lately, of people well known there, and there is the same happy spirit of earnest prayer, thanksgiving, and testimony which I found in Mr. Evan Roberts' meetings at Merthyr. It was such a comfort to have our beautiful Collects and our Creed brought into the Revival Meetings, and



illuminated by the Spirit of GOD. Mr. Bridge, the curate there, was formerly a Church Army officer. He and the vicar's wife were with us, and did not mind the long, hilly walk home in pouring rain. The vicar is extra good.

At Dowlais, close to Merthyr, Capt. Roberts had a Sunday meeting, with several souls seeking salvation.

As to the time at Merthyr, I thank GOD for it with all my heart, and I feel that I learned a great deal. I arrived on Saturday and attended a prayer meeting composed almost entirely of stalwart men. They gave me a hearty welcome, and invited me to pray, to read the Scriptures, and to address them. The singing was magnificent, very solemn and spiritual. I always wondered why the hymn "Lead, kindly Light" was such a favourite, but I now wonder no longer, for I see how very appropriate and searching the words are.

The next morning I went, of course, to early Communion at Church, but I got to the Revival Meetings later in the morning and afternoon. The evening meeting was crammed before the afternoon meeting was over, so I did not get in. There was a great feeling of friendliness among the people. One felt that one was among brothers and sisters, and people whom one had never seen before shook hands as if they were old friends.

Before the time of service, the congregation sit singing hymns, and praying, and it is a remarkable experience to have three or four prayers going on at

once, with someone speaking at the same time, and the congregation singing. Strange to say, this does not seem at all confusing. Mr. Roberts rightly said, in answer to a complaint, that the prayers were to GOD and not to the congregation, and that if GOD heard them we need not be distressed that *we* did not hear them all. The prayers are so earnest, so long, and so loud, that it really is a good thing that several should be offered up at once. They may sometimes seem to us excited, but I think it is holy excitement. One young man seemed to me too excited (like the lad in Raphael's Transfiguration picture) but perhaps I was mistaken. A dear little boy of about nine years old, prayed with the greatest earnestness for a long time. It was indeed a blessing to be conscious of the wonderful unmistakable, overpowering presence of GOD.

Mr. Evan Roberts is a tall young man of 26, and his bright, illuminating smile has, I think, a great deal to do with his influence. He is, perhaps, not gifted with wonderful preaching powers, but what he says is good common sense, as well as spiritual. He is evidently in perfect touch with the meeting. Often he remains completely motionless for a long time. Then one sees his hands beginning to move, sometimes as if he were playing the piano with his left hand. Then he talks in an animated way, and you feel that he controls the Meeting—as far as it needs to be controlled by a man. But the truth is *the Meeting takes itself*, and does not need much human

guidance. Hymn-books are scarcely used, for everyone knows the hymns, and as there is no difficulty in many ministering at once, there is no need for either stopping the speakers, or asking them to begin. Only one young woman had to be checked, and that was because she began complaining that there had not been prayer enough, and that the people were coming too much to "*see the preacher*." Mr. Roberts got her to sit down, and said; "It is all right, sister. That will do!" At the Sunday afternoon meeting he was dreadfully distressed because (he said) there were two people in the Church who were at enmity, and that he could not go on with the meeting till they were reconciled. He then prayed for them, and wept, and sobbed, and threw himself on his knees. Then he said it was *too terrible*, and that the persons must either make it up or leave the Meeting. "Go out, go out," was cried on all sides, and many present prayed with very great earnestness. One man said: "You must go out, for Evan Roberts is going to pieces"; and he really seemed in such an agony that one was almost afraid he would be ill. By-and-bye, however, he seemed to have an intimation that all was well, or would be well, and the Meeting proceeded with much blessing as before.

The conversions are wonderful, and the difference in the lives of the people marked. I heard from our Captain in Bristol last night that one firm of brewers there had had to dismiss eight clerks because of the Revival in South Wales, where they largely sent

their goods. Mr. Bridge told me also of one much-frequented public house where only one pint of beer had been sold during the whole of one Sunday.

Everyone, of course, is talking about the Revival ; and it was being discussed in the train as I came to Dowlais. There are some people who call it excitement and say it will not last, but they know little of GOD'S ways. Revivals come from Him to do a special work, and when they cease the time for work does not cease, but the fruits are reaped. Revivals are never exactly like what we should choose and expect. There is always something for people to cavil at if they like to do so ; and, no doubt, there is a human element which causes certain mistakes, and even some mischief. It is like clear water seen through a coloured bottle. It *is* clear, but it does not *look* clear. So the Spirit of GOD, coming into a human vessel, may make people do strange things (as the prophets Micah and Hosea did), but that does not mean that it is not the HOLY GHOST Who is working through them. And the purer the vessel the better the effect.

This Revival comes in answer to prayer, in places where people have been hoping for it and desiring it. So let us all pray and believe and hope with all our might, and let the lives of our workers be cleansed and ready for GOD'S blessing.

In many ways the Revival is like the experience of the people at Corinth, and St. Paul's advice to them holds good for us now.

The Spirit of GOD was so manifest that I felt just as much blessed by the Welsh prayers and hymns as by those in the language I understood. The glory and power of it all is beautiful.

Comrades, it is a great experience to be in the immediate manifested presence of GOD. Mr. Carlile had the honour last January of a private interview with the King, and of talking to him and listening to him ; but how infinitely greater it is to be alone with GOD, to speak to Him, and to listen to His voice. And this experience may be ours every day of our lives. You and I know what the sense and the thrill of His Presence mean. Guard such times as your most precious treasure. Be swayed and moved by Him. "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

And now we come to our Scripture lesson—the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Ephesus ranks as one of the most important cities written of in the New Testament. St. Paul lived and worked there for at least three years. His farewell address to the Ephesian elders (recorded in the book of Acts) is supremely touching, and, perhaps, the most important of his letters from Rome—was the one written to the Church at Ephesus. When St. John (a prisoner in Patmos) had a vision of CHRIST, and was charged by Him with seven messages to seven contiguous Churches in Asia Minor, the first of these messages was to Ephesus. We, therefore, owe much to Ephesus ; and, in many ways, its Church is

a splendid example. But yet, our final thoughts about it are more than half sad, for the time came when it *left its first love*. Now-a-days we may visit its ruins and meditate on its past greatness and its present desolation.

The first Scriptural mention of Ephesus is in the 18th chapter of Acts, where we learn that St. Paul—who was then about fifty-five years old—paid it a short visit, and reasoned with the Jews in the Synagogue.

At his previous stopping place, Corinth, the Ruler of the Synagogue, Crispus, had been converted. His friends, Aquila and Priscilla, had been there with him, and, apparently, they accompanied him to Ephesus, and took up their abode in the town; and it was there that they had the privilege, later on, of instructing Apollos in the more perfect way. At his first visit to Ephesus, St. Paul was urged to lengthen his stay. He refused, but he promised to return later on.

He then travelled to Cæsarea, Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia, establishing all the disciples in order. This journey took some considerable time; but, when it was concluded, he came back to Ephesus, and remained there, apparently, for two or three years, working at his trade of tent-making. There he re-baptized, in the Name of the LORD JESUS, about twelve disciples of John the Baptist; and he spoke boldly in the Jewish Synagogue for three months. As, however, the Jews opposed him bitterly, he separated

from the Synagogue, and spoke henceforth in the School of Tyrannus (for two years). So that all in Asia (Jews and Greeks) heard the Gospel.

There were many miracles of healing here, performed by his hands and by garments which had touched him, and which carried the power of healing diseases and casting out devils. It was then that the false exorcists were judged, and that the mystical books (worth fifty thousand pieces of silver) were burned. The Word of GOD grew mightily and prevailed, and the Church of Ephesus was formed.

Then came the tumult about the goddess Diana, after which St. Paul left (according to his previous plan) for Macedonia and Greece. On his return from this journey, he sent (at Miletus) for the elders of the Church of Ephesus, and most of the 20th chapter of Acts is taken up with the account of his farewell to these loved and honoured friends.

He was now about sixty years old. Two years later he became a prisoner in Rome till his death, and it was then that he penned the Epistle to the Ephesians, which blesses us to this hour.

We could find it in our heart to wish that this epistle was the final word about Ephesus, but it is not. For our profit we get another glimpse. Our LORD Himself sent a message of love and warning to her, through His beloved Apostle and friend, St. John. He tells her that she was great in works—in patience, in toils, and in orthodoxy. But she had left her first love, and she was warned that the light might depart from her.

Who shall say whether it *did* depart, or if it did, whether it was restored? The last words to Ephesus are a promise that if she overcomes she shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of GOD.

Many good things grow from happy beginnings, and flower and fruit beautifully, though they afterwards decay and die. But is there not a resurrection from the dead? We cannot say that the fact of Ephesus being now in ruins proves that there did not go forth seeds from her which helped to keep alive the Gospel for eternity.

The city was a stronghold of idolatry, and how evil idolatry was it is not easy for us to tell. It was devilry. It did not merely mean a foolish and ignorant worship of wood and stone; but, like all false bad beliefs, it had wickedness at its very heart. Now-a-days we think we can afford to smile contemptuously at the idols collected in glass cases in our national museums. I remember my little niece, whose father was an Indian missionary, praying every day that she might "not worship the ugly idols." We thought it rather an unnecessary prayer. But in their day there resided in idols a fearful demoniacal power for evil. Idolatry meant murder, cruelty, injustice, falsehood, vice, and obscenity. St. Paul tells us that though an idol is nothing, yet that those who sacrifice to it are sacrificing to devils. When I was in Calcutta I saw a horrible image of Kali being worshipped by her votaries. At her annual festival a large idol of her is made, which is believed to be endued for a time with



her spirit. It is worshipped with all sorts of accompanying horrors during the days of the feast ; but when they are ended her spirit is supposed to depart, and the empty idol is done with and is thrown, as useless, into the Ganges. It has become only wood again, and is no longer inhabited by Kali.

Nowadays we are learning something of the hitherto undiscovered creative powers of thought. I tremble when I think how great and malevolent they may sometimes be. GOD forgive us who have allowed ourselves to think evil thoughts. Thanks be to His Name, there are blessings as well as curses which emanate from men. What powers are inherent in our thought ! Good and evil spirits are both busier than we think. Sometimes they work through a ring, or an article of clothing, or a keepsake, a picture, an image, a flower, or a book. It was through no mistake, we may be sure, that the Bible warns its readers in the most searching and tremendous terms against idolatry. Job knew more of the danger than we do, when he spoke of the mysterious temptation of being "enticed" to worship the sun and the moon. We cannot tell what psychic force may have been in the image of Diana, which was said to have fallen from Jupiter. Lucien, one of the Roman poets, has left us a remarkable play, in which he describes sarcastically the fears of the heathen gods at their approaching annihilation, which could only come about through men's universal disbelief in them. The old evils of idolatry—in somewhat different forms—

may be nearer us to-day that we think. There is, perhaps, no subject that is more affected by modern thought than *sin*. Everywhere we find the tendency to minimise its guilt, and the kind of conviction of sin that we read of in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and in many old and saintly writers is getting less and less common. I cannot altogether account for this, but we prove it continually, even in Church Army work. How does GOD feel about the world's sin? How does CHRIST feel about it? This is a difficult question.

How does a father feel about his wretched fallen child's sin? He undoubtedly feels responsibility mixed with his condemnation. He feels the disgrace of it, as well as alarm and horror, and yet he feels the sense of a common nature. Do we not all feel *kinship* when we hear of some dreadful sin which we have never been even tempted to commit? Do we not tremble somehow, for ourselves as well as for the sinner?

"Master, is it I?" cried the eleven innocent disciples when they were told of the horrible treachery of one of their number. "GOD, GOD, forgive us all," prayed the blameless physician in "Macbeth," when the guilt of the murderess was displayed before him.

The mystery of sin is very great. I remember, many years ago, an old man, who was the object of contemptuous, impatient dislike to almost everybody who knew him. But there was no serious fault found

with him. He was well off, and seemed kindly and respectable. He fell into sin, and was profoundly humiliated and wretched, and immediately there arose for him feelings of tenderness and kindness, and readiness to help, to pity, and to love. We have all probably known similar cases, which make us think of our LORD'S strange saying that there is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-and-nine just persons who need no repentance.

And now let us consider the characteristics of the Epistle to the Ephesians. I am anxious that we should have clear, carefully formed knowledge about the Bible. So many people study it very little. They are familiar with a few chapters, a few stories, and a few texts; but that is not the way we ought to know the book which is the rule of our life and the food of our souls. Perhaps there are some of us who could scarcely say how this epistle differs from the other epistles.

First, I notice that there are not in it the individual touches which make the three previous epistles so vivid. There are many warnings and admonitions as to common dangers and sins, but they do not seem to have been elicited by actual faults and shortcomings of the Ephesians. This is greatly to their credit, especially as St. Paul had lived with them for at least three years, and must have known them well. We know of two visits he paid there, and probably there were more. This absence of

personal touches, and of the slightest mention of his having lived at Ephesus is so remarkable that I am inclined to think that the epistle, though written primarily to the Ephesians, must have been meant almost equally for the surrounding churches which Tychicus was probably intended also to visit. The more so as we read in our new version that some ancient authors omit the words "at Ephesus" in the opening greeting. At all events there are no complaints like those in the Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians. And St. Paul feels free to go forth on the boundless *ocean of GOD*—His foreknowledge, His wisdom, His love, His mystery, His Spirit, His triumph in Christ—His Church, and His teaching of the powers above. These are his high subjects, undisturbed by earthly details. I think the epistle is distinguished by the golden light of approaching sunset. This is specially true of the three first chapters, which deal almost exclusively with universal things. But in the last three chapters, though they are mainly taken up with the Christian's earthly walk, there is the same heavenly light. St. Paul's other epistles seem to have over them the daylight of noon, but this one suggests the glow of the late afternoon. All through we are conscious of that Divine ecstasy, in which the soul most truly knows GOD. St. Paul beholds by faith what St. Peter calls the "restitution of all things." He rejoices in the heights and depths of salvation. Vistas of glory are evident to him, and the natural result (as shown also in

the 11th and 12th of Romans) is his message "Beloved children be good, know GOD, overcome, peace and grace be yours." The first half of the epistle is like mountains seen in clear light. The second half is of the earth but heavenly.

It might be reckoned almost as a fault, perhaps, that the sentences in this epistle are so very long. It gives a sort of breathlessness to its utterances.

With it we must read Revelation ii. There the sunset light has deepened, and we feel sad instead of joyful. Yet "though much is taken, much remains." I think it seems as if the Ephesians had carefully attended to St. Paul's admonitions. Was the candlestick removed? If so perhaps its light was clear for a long time, and left an eternal trail behind it.

The epistle contains six chapters, of which the following is a very short summary:—

CHAPTER I.—Greeting to faithful saints.

Blessed be the beneficent God of our eternal salvation, victorious in the future over all; Whose sons we are, foreordained before the foundation of the world; redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sealed with the HOLY GHOST.

I give thanks for you. May you know Him, and His glory and power, through the Resurrection and exaltation of Christ, Who is our Head, and Who has all things in subjection.

CHAPTER II.—And we who are dead in sin are quickened and exalted with Christ. It is

God's gift. Christ has abolished enmity and given access to you Gentiles, and a place and citizenship with the saints.

CHAPTER III.—I am your apostle declaring God's mystery in Christ Jesus, purposed by Him from eternity. I bow my knees and pray God that by His Spirit you may know the love of Christ, and be filled with the fulness of God.

CHAPTER IV.—Be good. Keep unity. Each one has his own special gift for the perfecting of the entire body. Do not be bad like the unregenerate Gentiles. Be truthful, temperate, honest, industrious, pure and kind.

(This is the chapter which deals with the intensely interesting and practical subject of the New Man).

CHAPTER V.—Imitate God. Sins of the flesh bring upon you His wrath. Be children of light—wise and holy and happy.

Wives and husbands, do your duty to each other. Be loving. Remember Christ and His bride the Church.

CHAPTER VI.—Children, fathers, servants, masters, be good. Finally, be strong in the armour of God. I am sending Tychicus to you.

I think enough has now been said to send you with fresh zeal to the study of this exquisite epistle. May God's Holy Spirit inspire you as you read it.

As I think of it, I always feel it is mainly a revelation of God in His perfect beauty and love and holiness and power.

Here, in England, I doubt if we half appreciate the blessing of knowing, as our foundation truth, the perfect goodness of the one Almighty GOD, Who is unalterably Love. But those who, like myself, have been among heathen, can partly realize how dreadful and sickening it would be to have to believe in a god who was cruel and unjust and selfish and bad, and who cared only for his own glory and pleasure, apart from the fate of his creatures.

Christians cannot boast over the heathen, for, alas, Christians (especially extreme Calvinists and Roman Catholics), have invented and believed things about GOD which, if they had been true, would (as we are told to be imitators of GOD) have almost justified their own horrible cruelties and injustices. People naturally become gradually like the GOD they worship. Let us, therefore, know GOD truly and carefully, and so gaze on Christ that we may be changed into His likeness. I pray for you all by name.

E.C.

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May, 1905.

DEAR COMRADES,

One of the happiest things I ever do is writing to you these bi-monthly letters. Again I thank you warmly for your replies.

I have just been one by one through my long list of your names, with prayers and thanksgiving before GOD.

May He Who is Almighty Love and Wisdom bless and guide every one of us.

This has been a wonderful winter and spring for evangelising. The Welsh Revival seems to have warmed the heart of every worker. Faith and hope and love, have been quickened. We have all been giving thanks, and praying and waiting for further Divine tokens. Marked blessing has already come. In the Church Army, the report forms of our Officers show conversions more than we have ever had since the Church Army began twenty-three years ago. Of course we know that not all stand firm who receive the Word gladly. Some are like the wheat that sprang up quickly, and soon withered away. Our LORD tells us in His first recorded parable what kinds of effects to look for. But whether in Wales, or in England, or elsewhere, we may confidently expect a *proportion* of abiding results of seed received on good ground, and bringing forth fruit a hundred fold. The



happiness of work done for GOD, and with GOD, far exceeds the sorrow. And CHRIST tells us that even our sorrow shall, somehow, be turned into joy some day. I believe this with all my heart.

To you, dear comrades, I have not got to write of the delight of evangelising. You feel as I feel (and as I have felt for forty years) that no other work is like it. To declare the salvation of GOD through CHRIST to listening Souls, and to help to win them into His Kingdom is surely the happiest work that a man or woman can be called to. We may work by preaching or example, by giving, by self-denial, by joy or by pain. All GOD'S ways are good ways, and all of us are called in some way to help. The most prominent people are not always the most important. In the body the heart and lungs are not *seen* as the hands and feet are seen. But it is they who breathe and beat with life, and without whom the body would be lifeless. So it is in the Church of CHRIST. The most visible members are not the most vital. Results come when all work together. One of the happiest and most beautiful sights I ever saw was last night when at the conclusion of the Albert Hall meeting (for men only) hundreds of young men rose from all parts of the vast building and walked to the front to receive forgiveness and salvation through CHRIST. How many had had a hand in these conversions? Those who prayed and spoke, and worked and gave money—all could rejoice together, and could know that GOD was thus sealing their special service done

for Him. Let us always beware of claiming Souls as of our own winning—as a rule many share the triumph of winning a Soul.

Certainly the Holy Spirit is now working in a very exceptional way, and we may well rejoice in the first-fruits. But a great harvest is coming. The Spirit has been indeed moving over the face of the earth, awakening and arousing, and showing CHRIST as Saviour and Friend. Remember that revivals never happen exactly as we should choose, else they would, I suppose, become too popular with the world. When GOD gives a great victory He generally gives a cross also, lest disaster should be needed for humiliation.

I feel as if just now we could take no subject for our Scripture lesson but Evangelising. And I believe it will do us all good to fix our attention on the mission journeyings of St. Paul. I will not at this time more than glance at his early life and his conversion. We all know how he was brought up at the feet of the great Jewish teacher Gamaliel, who seems to have been a noble and wise man. Paul (or Saul) of the tribe (like King Saul) of Benjamin was distinguished in his early days as an earnest, and religious young Jew. He assisted at the martyrdom of Stephen, and he probably received at the same time an indelible impression from the words, the demeanour, and the death of the martyr. His first recorded sermon is notably on the lines of St. Stephen's address, and very likely it was for him a sort of pattern address.

It was given years later at Antioch in Pisidia.

Both speeches strike us as dull at their commencement. For they are a repetition of well-known historic facts. But Paul's address is studiously polite all through, and Stephen's is irritating to his audience, whose sore point was pride in their nationality. Paul's sermon made a favourable impression, and his listeners wished to hear him again. Stephen was interrupted and slain before he came to the CHRIST part of his Sermon. But he was probably *intending* to die, just as Paul was intending to live. Both were no doubt right.

Almost immediately after the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul was won to CHRIST. Then he stayed quietly in Damascus for a while. Then he went (we know not for how long) to Arabia. Then he returned to Damascus, and soon he became foremost among the apostles. He was one of the greatest men that has ever blessed the world, though in some respects his character may seem lacking in beauty (as is the case with most of us!)

We take for our lesson the nine chapters of the Acts (13th to 21st) which record his missionary journeys before he became a prisoner, first at Jerusalem, and then at Rome, where he died.

The first 12 of the 28 chapters which compose the book of Acts, tell us of CHRIST'S Ascension, of the day of Pentecost and its effects, of the growth of the Church, of the incident of Ananias and Sapphira, of the miracles of the apostles at Jerusalem and of their early persecutions and triumphs. Then comes the

charming story of St. Peter at Joppa and Cornelius at Cæsarea. The Gentiles were now being brought in at Antioch and elsewhere, largely through Barnabas and Paul.

Then comes the beautiful 12th chapter, with the death of James and the deliverance of Peter. Then the narrative goes on at Antioch, and here our subject for to-day begins. The time was probably about seventeen years after St. Paul's conversion, and we do not know what he had been doing during these years beyond the fact that some considerable time had been passed in Damascus, and in Arabia, where (like Moses) he must have learned much in seclusion, direct from GOD. He had been twice to Jerusalem during this time, and he had been working at Damascus, Tarsus, and Antioch. He had made a warm friend of Barnabas, whom we first hear of in the 4th chapter as consecrating the price of his land to GOD.

Paul was now middle aged. He is said (by tradition) to have been rather a short man with a forked beard and very piercing eyes. His character comes out vividly in his epistles and in the book of Acts which is said to have been written by his friend St. Luke. I can think of no man who after 1900 years we can see so clearly. His power, his talent, his egotism are all made apparent a hundred times. We find that his courage was dauntless, his affection strong, and his spiritual insight wonderful. Except CHRIST, no man (I should think) has been so important to us.

I had intended to give you a continuous narrative of his three missionary journeys, but after going repeatedly through them and making a careful map of them I have decided that it will be better to comment on certain facts connected with them, rather than to burden your memory with details and names which you can best learn by working them out as I have done by study and a map. There are apparently eight journeys recorded.

- 1.--That from Jerusalem to Damascus, when he was converted.
- 2.—The journey from Damascus to Arabia, and back.
- 3.—The journey, three years after his conversion, when he went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him for fifteen days, returning to Damascus by Syria and Cilicia, and probably visiting his native city of Tarsus, which is in Cilicia. (This journey is only mentioned in the Epistle to the Galatians.)
- 4.—The journey, eleven or fourteen years later from Damascus to Jerusalem. He tells us specially that he went up by revelation, and that Titus was with him and Barnabas, who when they reached Jerusalem brought him to the Apostles Peter, James and John.
- 5—His first missionary journey with Barnabas, starting from Antioch, and visiting Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Perga and Jerusalem.

- 6.—His second missionary journey, starting at Jerusalem and ending at Antioch, visiting Lystra, Antioch in Pisidia, Troas, Philippi (in Greece), Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Antioch.
- 7.—The third missionary journey beginning at Antioch, Paul visiting Capadocia and Galatia (and travelling in the neighbourhood of the Seven Churches in Asia), Berea, Corinth, Macedonia, Philippi, Troas, Ephesus, Tyre and Jerusalem.
- 8.—The eighth journey, beginning at Jerusalem, and going by Cæsarea to Rome.

I want to make a digression here about Barnabas.

His record is very beautiful. His real name was Joseph, but his friends had surnamed him Barnabas, which means "the son of consolation." The Church at Jerusalem speaks of him as "our beloved Barnabas." His appearance (like his character) must have been noble, for the people at Lystra took him for Jupiter, who is always represented as a magnificent, bearded man in the prime of life. Barnabas was a Levite, and a native of the island of Cyprus. We first hear of him as selling his land and bringing the money, and laying it at the feet of the Apostles. This enthusiastic and generous gift seems to have suggested the action of Ananias and Sapphira, who are for ever a type of those religious people who wish to be thought better and more liberal than they really are. Peter seems to have treated them with a terrible severity,

but probably he knew by inspiration the extent of their sin better than we can know it. Ananias at the beginning seems more to have *acted* a lie than to have spoken one. I tremble to think how many of us have professed to consecrate all to GOD, and yet have kept back part of the price, even if we have not been guilty of deliberate intention in doing so. "GOD, GOD, forgive us all." I have often wondered that, with the memory of his own recent denial of CHRIST with oaths and curses, he could be so merciless in his treatment of Ananias and Sapphira, and also in his condemnation of Judas. (Just as David was tremendously severe on his enemies, even after his own sin of murder and adultery. The Bible never blinks the faults and shortcomings of good people as our modern memoirs do.)

The second notice of Barnabas is when after several years (perhaps seventeen) he went up from Damascus with Paul to Jerusalem and introduced him there to the Apostles who were half afraid of this fiery convert. Evidently Barnabas had taken a great affection and admiration for Paul. And we find that shortly afterwards he gave fresh proof of his friendship by fetching Paul from Tarsus to be "glad" at the progress of Christianity in Antioch (Syria). We are told that he was "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." After another year he returned to Jerusalem with Paul (taking alms for the hungry).

Then he became Paul's companion on his mission-

ary journey, till at last they had a sharp contention as to whether the young man Mark (Barnabas's nephew—who had certainly been to blame for leaving them) should again be taken as their travelling companion. Barnabas said Yes. Paul said No, and who can tell now which was right and which was wrong? Mark turned out well eventually, notwithstanding his early fault, and Paul himself testified to his value, and sent for him later to come to him. The quarrel, like many others, was probably over-ruled for good. Barnabas and Mark went their way, and Paul took Silas with him and went his way. Silas was a prophet and chief among the Jerusalem Christians, who had chosen him to accompany Paul to Antioch. Together they journeyed, and together they suffered persecution at Phillippi. Silas seems to have continued with Paul for about a year. Perhaps Barnabas almost envied Silas!

From Berea, Paul escaped to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remained behind till Paul sent for them to come to him. He had left Athens, but they joined him at Corinth, and after this we do not hear again of Silas.

I may be wrong, but I always feel as if Paul was mistaken in not meeting Barnabas's wish about Mark. Barnabas had been a splendid friend, for twenty years, and Paul's travelling companion for about eight years, and he was evidently a noble-hearted fellow.

We have no ground for saying that because Paul



and Barnabas did not remain working together they ceased to be intimate friends. Very likely they continued such. But friendships are not always lasting, and it is sad to find how sometimes they are sacrificed to egotism, or fickleness, or to some unworthy reason. What miserable quarrels we have all known about some paltry bit of money, or some petty jealousy? A man's worth can almost be tested by his capacity for steady, fine, unselfish friendship. Remember that there is always something to bear on both sides, and there are occasionally moments when one's friend is pre-occupied, and below the usual level. It is *then* that faithfulness and love and tact must come in and win the victory. In times of trial and twilight let us keep to our friends—patiently, lovingly, and unselfishly. Let us always be “on their side,” and let no angry or wounding speech come from us. It is our opportunity, and if we use it we shall triumph, and bind our friend for life. Friends are priceless, and must be treated carefully. Let us make no unreasonable claims on them, and do not let us borrow money of them, for this is apt to be a strain, and to do damage. Indeed as to lending money, it is a good rule never to lend it unless we can afford to lose it. I think that in four cases out of five lending money proves a danger to friendship, though this is not always the case. I have lent money two or three times in my life without losing my friend, and there are cases when to lend money confers a lasting benefit.

Possibly the friendship between Paul and Barnabas had received a check or blow at Antioch shortly before the quarrel. It appears (from Galatians 2) that Peter had come down to Antioch (where a great work was going on) and had followed the excellent new custom of eating with the Gentiles. But certain Jews came down from James at Jerusalem and in deference to them Peter withdrew and separated. The other Jews at Antioch "dissembled likewise with them, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation."

Paul (rightly) would not stand this and "resisted Peter to the face" because he "stood condemned." We read the account of it all at length in the second chapter of Galatians written long after at Rome—and perhaps we are inclined to ask if there is not something ungracious in Paul's telling the Galatians this long story—so many years after it had happened—all about Peter's fault and Barnabas's weakness, and his own strength and virtue and rightness. And his independence of help and instruction from the others. Egotism was still evident in him and he seems to have been half conscious of it (2 Cor. XI.) But what splendid qualities and insight! And now his character shines white, and spotless, and the CHRIST life in him has absolutely triumphed.

Alas! we lose count of Barnabas after his separation from Paul. It may be that he ought to have given way about Mark as Paul would not. We cannot say at this distance of time. But it is all "made

up" now. Perhaps some one may say, "What is the use of going into all these matters so long after they happened, and how can we C.A. people profit by them? But most of us know that it is such Bible study as this that forms our characters and unconsciously makes us act and feel rightly. It is food for our souls. Let us digest it, and live by it. The blessing is great of having our minds and hearts occupied with "things that are true and lovely and of good report."

I have been making notes of the different kinds of guidance in the lives of Paul and the other disciples of the Book of Acts, but I find I must reserve them, or this letter will be too long. Meanwhile, I wish that you would study the matter for yourselves, for what I write to you will be of more value if you have yourselves been pondering over the subject and forming your own conclusions. You will find guidance of several kinds described. Try to balance them, and to draw lessons for your own conduct and lives.

E.C.

*November, 1901.*

DEAR COMRADES,

Thank you warmly for your replies to my September letter. I think they have given me even more happiness than usual. Your comments (especially on the subjects of quarrelling, and friendship, and on the Epistles) show how vivid and real these subjects are to you.

God has given us a brave, loyal, determined staff of officers—men and women. How heartily we give Him thanks. I hope the older officers will forgive (for the sake of the younger ones) my telling you so often that I bring (as I have just now done on this bright Sunday morning) the long and happy list of your names—one by one—before God, remembering, as far as I know them, your individual needs. All of you are dear to us, and I am always particularly glad to hear from those officers (Van, Social and Associate) who are not actually in my department. Write whenever you choose, but do not let it be a burden to you. How few officers we have had who have been cold or disloyal or reserved with Headquarters! I cannot think of a dozen in all these many years. And even from some of those few there have been letters sorrowfully owning their fault. It certainly *is* a foolish and lamentable fault, for what are we *for*—the Headquarter's staff—if we are not to help you and

bless you (even if you have erred)? We do hope and expect that you will care for us as brothers and as sisters, and as those who, in God's providence, are set over you. If you are dissatisfied with us, tell us so; and if we cannot improve matters you are, of course, free to seek other work, and we will still help you all that we can. But do not be disloyal. We have been much pained by a young officer (now gone) who habitually kept back from us important matters affecting his work, and who used to go about grumbling at Headquarters, and smoking, and not wearing his uniform. How foolish, as well as wrong! I consider it almost as fatal for any officer to be without his uniform as it was for Samson to be without his long hair!

But, on the whole, we have cause for deep thanksgiving all round. One young officer asks me to say if it is true that we disapprove of marrying? Certainly not. We approve thoroughly of it when the right time comes. But it should not take place till an officer has steadily and repeatedly proved his spiritual and financial ability. And before he risks the probability of a family he should have saved some money, and should belong to a club. St. Paul's advice to the Corinthians is wise and good.

Let us take for our lesson to-day the four concluding epistles of St. Paul, beginning with the first Epistle to Timothy, written from Laodicea, in Phrygia. It has great beauties, and is full of tender affection—the production of a wise, experienced,

anxious, vehement, and holy man. He calls Timothy his own son in the faith, and in both Epistles it is evident how warm and pathetic his love for him was.

Timothy's character is easily discernible: a good, true young man, not strong physically, with a character less powerful than gentle, kindly and studious. "Let no man despise thy youth. I am mindful of thy tears. Take a little wine for thine often infirmities. Your mother and grandmother have brought you up well. Endure hardness. Do not listen to old wives' fables. Be not ashamed of me even though I am in prison. Night and day I long to see you. Come to me before winter. Grace be with you." All these incidental touches bring Timothy vividly before us.

He became Bishop of Ephesus, and the third chapter of this Epistle looks as if he and St. Paul had both got the Bishopric in mind. How unlike he was to St. Paul, who was strong and fierce before his conversion—"a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious" (as he tells us). He was always full of fight and valour, and of endurance and passionate devotion.

This Epistle treats a good deal of heresies, and departures from the faith, and of dark, evil doings. There is severity in it; but deep down there is peace and gladness, for St. Paul looks beyond evil and trouble to the time when our Lord's prayer will be answered in its fulness, and God's salvation reach its final triumph. All through his Epistles there is no hint that he ever had a doubt that goodness would in the end absolutely triumph over badness; and this

result was to be brought about under God by *our* faith and patience and work. This was the belief that inspired him to do and suffer as he did.

It is a very business-like letter, with many directions to different classes of people—bishops, deacons, deacons' wives, elders, servants, old and young women, and old and young widows.

St. Paul was extremely anxious that Timothy should not occupy himself about certain trivial, unworthy matters which he calls "old wives' fables—genealogies, disputes of words, profane babblings, foolish questionings." Eight separate times in the two Epistles he warns him against this. And nowadays, too, there is a danger of men and women being led off the right lines by foolish, fanciful controversies. I remember a batch of cadets in training being half-spoilt because one or two of them would keep arguing about baptism. All such subjects as the Sacraments, everlasting punishment, and definitions of a clean heart, are best not argued about by C.A. officers. For bitterness and separation of spirit are apt to come in and hurt the soul. It is better to understand that on these and various other topics our Church wisely allows diversity of opinion. I do not mean that we are not to give such subjects their due proportion and share of our private attention. But in discussing them I like the Quaker way of each stating his or her conclusion, or difficulty, and avoiding controversy.

We are a non-party society. But if you want to

know privately my conclusion on these points they are as follows :—

As to Baptism, I believe that obedience to Christ is our *unassailable* ground. It is the rite which brings us into the privileges of the visible Church, and it is connected with the blessings of regeneration and the new birth. God's grace, however, is not confined to His ordained means. It is obvious that many persons are truly converted and have the Divine life in them *before* Baptism; and, alas! many who are baptised are (awful though it may seem) on the road which leads to destruction. May God give them repentance.

In the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, I am sure that the soul should be fed by the actual life of our Lord. He is certainly and actually present in the bread and wine. Indeed, there is no place where He is not potentially present; but we claim the Sacrament as a special and ordained means of receiving Him for our souls increased life and health.

As to the question of endless punishment, there is much difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of Bible terms, and our Church allows its children to hold either of the three views. In any case hell is an awful reality. But it is not our work to *argue* the question of destruction there of body and soul, or of endless suffering, or of the possibility of receiving Christ as Saviour after death. Let it be enough for us to teach that "now is the accepted time."

Perhaps some of us may think that in this Epistle to Timothy, and also in other writings of his, St.



Paul does not write quite fairly about women. In one place he expressly tells us, when he is on the subject, than he is speaking by permission, and not by commandment; and probably this is the case in other places also. We must, however, remember that he evidently had great friends among women—Priscilla, Lydia, Lois, Eunice, Persis, and others whom he mentions by name

Still, for my part, I *am* inclined to think that he was not quite fair to women. If we compare our Lord's way of honouring them, and praising them, I think we shall be conscious of a difference. We cannot imagine St. Paul's words about the "younger widows" coming from the lips of Christ. It looks as if some special personal experience must have embittered him. The words at the end of the second chapter of Timothy certainly seem contemptuous. And why did he not give them their first place among the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection?

One of the great results of Christianity has been the honouring of women, and the raising them high in the scale of humanity. No doubt there has been foolish and ridiculous talk, especially in America, about women's rights and powers. But the best women keep clear of this nonsense, or, at any rate, escape from it like Tennyson's heroine in the poem of "The Princess," which deals with the subject in a noble, chivalrous and masterful way. Happy is the man who loves and honours good women, and who is influenced largely by their love, their tenderness, their

charity, their patience, and, in many instances, their ruling power. A good woman is, perhaps, God's best earthly gift to a man, and her importance can scarcely be exaggerated. But to claim that they have generally the *same* mental, physical, and creative powers as men is foolish. No woman has attained the first rank as an inventor, a discoverer, a painter, or a composer of music. The wonderful Joan of Arc was apparently the best French *general* of her time. The almost legendary Sappho is said to have been one of the greatest poets; Rosa Bonheur, Lady Butler and Lady Waterford have been highly gifted painters. But more than this we cannot say, and it would be a terrible thing for the world if woman left her beautiful, gracious vocation to compete with men in regions for which neither body nor mind fit her. Let her inspire man to do his task, while she keeps her own sweet and dignified place in the world. No man ever can or will fill that place; and the best men look up to women as far above them, and worthy of their deepest reverence. Their insight is often far more correct than man's insight, and their writing powers are, in some departments, unsurpassable in charm. Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and G. Eliot rank among our first writers of fiction. And many of the greatest saints and the greatest rulers have been women.

But, in the time of St. Paul, women were probably far less eminent and important than they have since become, largely through the influence of Christianity.

And now we will pass on to the Second Epistle of Timothy, of which the characteristic is its *pathos*. Only a year had passed since the first epistle had been sent, but many things had happened since: St. Paul had been tried before Agrippa, had gone to Rome, and been imprisoned there.

We feel that this second epistle is such as we should expect to be written by an old, saintly man waiting in prison for death. St. Paul was ripe for the sickle.

Jewish and Roman enemies are around him, and the malignant opposition of Alexander, the copper-smith, has hurt him deeply. Some of his friends have cooled towards him, and have forsaken him. So he tells us. One hopes that he may have been *partly* mistaken as to their disloyalty when he wrote—"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Compare this with our Lord's experience when all His disciples forsook Him and fled. No doubt St. Paul thought of it. But it often happens that circumstances intervene, and make things look blacker than they are. God may see fit to order for us a searching experience which He knows that we need. "All have forsaken me," has been the cry of many a disconsolate heart; but when brighter days come the man sees that he has misjudged his friends, and he can look up and thank God for the past pain and for its discipline.

Demas, doubtless, was to blame for going to Thessalonica; but does St. Paul mean that Crescens might

have put off going to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia, in order to remain with him? I do not know. Certainly, after all these centuries, we should have honoured either of the two men if we had heard that with the love that never faileth (and which is greater than even faith or hope), he had stayed to minister to St. Paul till the end came. "He that hath friends must show himself friendly," said Solomon. But it is more than possible that they were *not* to blame. St. Paul may have had some of the weaknesses of old age—some acrimony, and some egotism. But what fire, and devotion, and wisdom, and tenderness were his! How small other people look beside him! Let us cherish and honour aged Christians, even if it means some self-denial, and God will bless and reward us a hundred-fold.

We can not suppose that St. Paul's friends were without true affection and respect for him. Probably they honoured and loved him much, only not quite enough to make certain considerable sacrifice for his sake. No doubt we sometimes expect too much of our friends—more than we ourselves are prepared to give them when the circumstances are reversed. Let us, then, not be too hard on them if they seem to fail us in that hour of need which we realise in all its bitterness, but which *they* are, perhaps, too busy to think much about. On the other hand, if *we* have neglected *our* friends, from carelessness or inattention, or self-indulgence, we must realise in our after-apologies that we have failed, and that we cannot claim, or

expect, the same grade in their regard, or in God's rewards, that we should have had if we had spent thought and care and self-denial in their time of need. It is a fair excuse to say "I am very sorry, but I was so busy and had so many claims on me;" but the fact remains that we did not care enough about the matter to take the trouble which meant self-denial. Apologies are very good things, but they do not make up for the wrong done. I heard a story in America of the captain of a band of lynchers who had shot the wrong man by mistake. He called on the widow and apologised. And he said, "We must admit, madam, that you have got the laugh on us this time." A dreadful apology!

If we have, accidentally, put out a man's eye, it is all very well to say, "I am extremely sorry, and I won't do it again;" but that does not give him back his eye. Some folks apologise too easily, and seem to suppose that by doing so they make the most serious injuries all right.

In friendship, as well as *in other things*, there is a price to pay for everything that is worth having. There are people who talk about their great desire for spirituality, and for a stronger and happier faith; but if they do not pay the price to win these gifts they should not complain of not possessing them. They should rise early, and win quiet times for seeking and listening to the Divine Voice. Others are truly anxious to do good and to benefit others; but their desire slackens when it becomes a question of steady,

self-denying work, and of giving up idle pleasures. This is why so many people are comparatively useless as workers. Sometimes it is a question of money. I remember a number of good people talking over a great wrong which had to be remedied, and Mr. T. A. Denny said, "*How much* do you care about it? I care £100, and I will give that to help to get it put straight."

The motive of this second epistle to Timothy is mainly affection. St. Paul dearly loves him, and he desires that he should be great, noble and heroic (though he must have known that the good and gentle Timothy would always be a lesser man than himself.) This anxiety comes out again and again. "Be not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, or of me. Hold fast, be strong, endure hardships. Be free and brave. Watch in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of the ministry." It is easy to guess in what direction Timothy's dangers lay.

As I think of this epistle I think of many of you, our dear, young officers.

There are fewer directions and admonitions in this epistle than in the other, but the dangers were still there, though doubtless being gradually overcome. "Do thy diligence to come shortly to me. Do thy diligence to come before winter. Bring my cloak with you, and the books and the parchments." It is not a doctrinal epistle. St. Paul writes strongly and sternly of enemies and oppressors, and very warmly of

friends. "Dark days are coming. My life is near its close. God will judge all. He is ever at my right hand, and will give me the victory."

It must have been shortly after this epistle was penned that he was beheaded by that wicked and despicable tyrant, the Emperor Nero.

The Epistle to Titus, the young Bishop of Crete, comes next. St. Paul writes from Nicopolis, and his letter is affectionate but written with much authority. Titus was probably a stronger man than Timothy. A good deal in the epistle reminds me of the Archbishop (Temple) of Canterbury.

As an artist I often wish that we had portraits of the people whom we read of in the Bible, but the tradition of St. Paul's appearance is probably true, that he was rather short, with very keen bright piercing eyes, and a long reddish beard. He writes here like a busy, vehement, sensible man who knew his business well, and would stand no nonsense. He believed in discipline and obedience, and he practised both himself.

Comrades, I want to *impress* this on you. *Those who obey best, command best.* And the one who has never learnt obedience is always unfit to command. Men and women who are lax about obeying rules that they have undertaken to keep are not much good to anyone, and can generally be parted with without many regrets. Our rules about uniform, hours of work, revisiting, letter writing, rest days, and such matters, are meant to be kept, and a man's or

woman's status with us largely depends on this kind of loyalty. Obedience generally means some self-denial, but it is worth practising. Let it be *willing*, the service of a friend, and not of a slave.

"Put them in mind to be subject, to be obedient," says St. Paul. Religious people ought certainly not to be less obedient than secular workers. What would be thought of a soldier in the king's army who said that the regulation cap gave him a headache, and that he should like to wear a soft felt hat, or that a pair of grey trousers would do quite well instead of the regulation trousers? (The Church Army has soft and stiff caps as well as straw hats, so there is no excuse for not being in order).

I want you to notice how St. Paul in all his epistles, whatever the special object in writing may be, always brings in the *gospel of salvation*, telling us fresh and beautiful facts about it. For instance, in the very beginning of this letter to Titus he tells us—what we did not know before—that God had promised eternal life to us before the world began. And at the end of the chapter we can almost hear his voice change to a deeper and tenderer tone when he says, "Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity." And again: "After that the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." I earnestly hope that as we get older we love God's gospel better, and meditate on it with increasing



delight as we learn more perfectly its depths and heights.

The 25 verses which compose the short letter to PHILEMON are jewels to us C.A. folks. Everybody is agreed in loving and admiring this epistle, and it is a very easy one both to understand and to remember when once we have fairly studied it. The aged St. Paul, a prisoner, writes to his beloved friend Philemon, and begs him to forgive a runaway slave named Onesimus, who had apparently been in the past a worthless fellow, but who had now been truly converted to God, through St. Paul at Rome.

Fifteen verses are taken up with the request, and the other ten with affectionate greetings. The letter is full of wisdom, love, and inspired tact, and we can scarcely doubt that it successfully attained its object, though we are not told what the sequel was. Perhaps we may wonder that St. Paul could be as confident as he was that Onesimus would "stand well." For our C.A. experience makes us very guarded in the expression of our expectations about converts. Sometimes I think that in those days the converts were of a more vigorous stamp, and that they did not so often fall away.

We do not know whether Philemon had been to blame in his treatment of this runaway slave. Probably not. At any rate he was dearly beloved by St. Paul, a fellow worker, full of love, full of hospitality, and a delightful man. St. Paul says that he always remembered him not only with prayer but with

thanksgiving. If Philemon had been to blame in any way St. Paul was too wise to say so on this occasion. For the time when we are trying to win a favour is the wrong time to insinuate blame! Though some people are stupid enough to make this mistake.

Every word of the epistle is worthy of careful study and admiration. Comments on it seem almost unnecessary; it is a model of courteous persuasion. It would scarcely have been possible for Philemon to refuse a request couched in such terms, especially as St. Paul says, "Withal, prepare me a lodging, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." It would have spoiled the pleasure of the coming visit if St. Paul's petition had not been granted!

The letter is a request, but a request more potent than a command. It is for love's sake that Philemon is asked to forgive Onesimus.

I want here to say a little to you about Christian tact, and what is called diplomacy. It is a valuable quality when it is used (as by St. Paul here) in careful obedience to our Lord's council, and, therefore, in strict accordance with the rules of truth and right. "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" is His command. But it is better to have no tact at all than to be deceitful. The best thing is to be, on occasions, both diplomatic and straightforward (as some officers are). To learn how to be agreeable is a good thing if it does not run to seed.

Some people almost always say the wrong thing—

partly from stupidity, but chiefly from want of care and sympathy. I copy for you, out of my diary, the speech of a person to whom a friend had complained of not feeling well. It is a first rate example of saying the wrong things :—

“I am sorry you are feeling ill; but I thought, while we were at luncheon, that most likely you would be sick. You should be more careful about your diet. I had a dear mother-in-law who was so greedy that it was a continual shock to live with her.

“Don’t worry about it. After all, we must all die *some* time. I have often thought that if anything happened to you I should like to buy this house and live in it. This is such a pretty room. I should put my cabinet just where that bookcase is. How do you feel now? By the way I do hope it is nothing *infectious*.”

These disagreeable speeches would never have been made by a nice, warm-hearted person. To be so untactful means that the whole nature is blunted by selfishness.

But sometimes the wrong thing is said only from stupidity, as by a Vicar, who was angry the other day with one of his parishioners because he was laying down the law too much.

“Are *you* the Vicar of this parish, pray?” he demanded.

“Well, no; I am not,” admitted a parishioner.

“Then don’t talk like an idiot,” was the Vicar’s unfortunate rejoinder. How vexed he was the next moment!

At one of our conferences we were all amused at the story of a lady who, in visiting a hospital, gave a man a tract, and was indignant, as she was walking away from his bedside, at hearing him laugh aloud.

"Excuse me, Ma'am," he said, "I can't help smiling. For you've given me a tract on the sin of dancing, and I have had both my legs cut off."

Mr. Grain tells us a story of another untactful lady, who was going to give a party, and who wrote to a friend:—

"Dear Mr. Smith,—I do so wish that you would come with your clever staff of amateurs, and act one of your *delightful* plays at my party. I should be so charmed and so grateful.—Yours very sincerely, Augusta Elton.—P.S.—If you cannot possibly do this, will you recommend me some *cheap glee singers*?"

The unlucky postscript quite spoilt the compliments of the letter.

Tact and clear perceptions are good things and may be conscientiously cultivated. But let them never encroach on sincerity.

It is quite certain that an untruth is always sinful. Let there be no doubt about this. I am ashamed of myself now, when I remember that, as a young man, I once told a lie about posting a letter. I confessed it in half a minute, but I still blush for it. There *are* people, however, who think a lie is justifiable, if it has for its motive the saving of a life, or some such advantage. But a lie *always* means want of faith in "God Who *cannot* lie" (Titus i. 2). If we trust in the

living God as Infinite Wisdom, Love and Power, we shall not need to lie, but we shall believe that He will bring the best thing to pass, and that we may and must do *exactly right*. It is better to die than to do wrong. I do not mean by this that we are to *tell* everything. That would often be unwise. When our Lord said, "What things?" to the disciples, walking to Emmaus, He was *reserving* truth. Indeed, He continually *kept back* truth if people were not ready to receive it. "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things," said He to the Pharisees. And the Sixth Chapter of St. John's gospel was a regular puzzle to many of His hearers.

Take a C.A. instance. We send an officer, perhaps, to a Vicar, who knows little about C.A. work, but who believes from the evidence of friends that a Captain or Mission-Nurse will be inexpensive, and also good for his parish. He, therefore, wishes to try, and he has received, and, we hope, read, our papers, describing the scope we ask for our Officers, and the conditions under which we send them.

Now in many cases it would be a mistake for the Captain or Mission-Nurse commencing work to bother the Vicar about every detail. *Some* Vicars wish to be consulted about every step, but as a rule it is best if you are engaged as a C.A. Officer to take it for granted that you are to work on the lines you have been trained to follow. It would be foolish for a Captain to say, "May I begin open-air?" Or for a Nurse to say, "May I try and start a cottage meeting?" Or

for either to say, "May I ask my workers to take part in the C.A. meeting?" All these things are part of our system, and the Vicar would rather you began them on your own responsibility. If he wishes to do so he can *stop* them (in which case of course you would obey him, but would write to Headquarters for a move, telling us that you could not get the regulation scope). But if you work with God's power and blessing, the Vicar will probably wish you to go on. If you consult him beforehand, and then make a failure he rightly considers that he has been put in a false position. (There is nothing that *Bishops* hate more than to be asked beforehand by their clergy if they may do certain things). Do *regulation* things without asking permission, and let the Vicar get credit if you succeed, and no blame if you fail. This kind of wisdom has much to do with winning power. And if your heart goes out to your Vicar with love and prayer and thanksgiving, you will find many opportunities of cheering him with reports of blessings received and appreciated by those to whom he has ministered. We nearly all love wise praise and it is generally good for us (if we deserve it). And this applies to Vicars and Curates as well as to the rest of us.

I often wonder that people do not thank us more than they do. For it is wise and pleasant as well as right.

If you want to cure a person of a fault, it is often the best way to wait till you can praise him or her for the opposite virtue.

"How well and reverently you behaved at the service yesterday," you say to someone who *occasionally* talks and disturbs.

"How capitally you kept your temper with Brother Smith last night," you say to Mr. Byal who is known to be often particularly disagreeable.

"Thank you so much for keeping in the background, and not speaking at the meeting when there were all those new friends who had to speak," you say to your Diotrephes.

"I took your two shillings to poor old Ophall in the workhouse, Mrs. Skinflint, and he is so grateful to you for it, and so am I from the bottom of my heart," you say to another.

And in the future Mrs. Skinflint will be more generous, and Diotrephes less pre-eminent, and Mr. Byal better tempered, and Mrs. Inconsiderate more reverent.

I can scarcely read the epistle to Philemon without a smile. But how I wish we were all endued with its lovely spirit. Its grace and kindness shine like a star through nineteen long centuries.

E.C.

*September, 1905.*

DEAR COMRADES,

I think this year will always count as a year much to be remembered by us. Its good things have been far beyond the common, but it has also been marked by special trials and sad assaults of evil and distress. This is what we should expect. The two go together. "Shall we receive good at the hand of GOD, and shall we not receive evil?" said Job. In the highest sense we never receive anything from GOD but good. But among His best gifts and messengers are sorrow and distress, for it is they which turn to joy and victory, and make us into what GOD would have us be.

If so-called evil never touched us we should never be changed into the likeness of CHRIST who fought with it so painfully and conquered so gloriously. Let the remembrance of this nerve us for the conflict as we day by day fight the good fight of faith. Almighty Love would never have allowed evil in the world, except to win a greater good than could be won without it.

There is great comfort and strength in believing this.

These last twelve months have been marked by the signs of GOD'S Holy Spirit working in a wonderful



way for conversions—more than has been the case for many years.

I want in this September letter to write to you specially about the character of GOD.

I have always had a great love for this calm season of Trinity which occupies about half of the Church's year. All the exciting events that are celebrated during the other part of the year are dear to us, but half the year is not too long to be thinking of GOD. "How beautiful is GOD!" said Charles Kingsley as he died. He is our Life and our Home. From Him is our Saviour evolved and begotten. Of Him is the Holy Ghost. He is revealed as our eternal Father. He is the very principle of all that is good and holy and true. How can we help loving Him when all that is worthy of love and admiration is comprised in Him? It is His eternal spirit in which we live and move and have our being.

Sweet thought of GOD! now do thy work,  
As thou hast done before.

The very thinking of the thought,  
Without or praise or prayer,  
Gives light to know and life to do,  
And grace and strength to bear.

Oh, there is music in that thought,  
Unto a heart unstrung,  
Like sweet bells at the evening time,  
Most musically rung.

'Tis not His justice or His power,  
His beauty or abode,  
But the mere unexpanded thought,  
Of the eternal GOD.

It is not of His wondrous works,  
Nor even that He is,  
Words fail it. but it is a thought,  
Which by itself is bliss.

Sweet thought ! lie closer in my heart,  
That I may feel Thee there,  
As one who for his weapon feels,  
In some nocturnal fear.

FABER.

In honouring one person of the Trinity we honour them all, for the Three are One, and the One is Three. Whoever loves and worships GOD loves and worships CHRIST, though he may never have heard the blessed name of JESUS, or realised that no one comes to the Father but by Him, Who is the visible manifestation of GOD. Who can say how far He may have drawn to Himself those whom (like Socrates) we have counted heathen. The first chapter of St. John's Gospel and the second chapter of Romans give us bright hopes.

There seems to me no Christian doctrine more to be cherished and counted vital than the fact that *GOD is perfectly good*, and any belief which clashes with this truth is to be detested.

The awful thing about heathenism is that its gods are wicked and cruel, but sometimes I think that they

are scarcely more wicked and cruel than the GOD of the (so-called Christian) Inquisition of Spain, or the cruel and unjust GOD of a certain kind of Calvinism. GOD is good. GOD is *Almighty Love*. Let us beware how we allow ourselves to believe anything which clashes with these fundamental truths. For instance the Roman Catholic religion has made it a dogma that all unbaptized babies (millions and millions of them) must for ever be unsaved and remain in the outer circle of hell which they call "Limbo."

Does not such a cruel and unjust doctrine tend to make those who believe it, cruel and unjust and neglectful too? Did Almighty Love create these babes for such a fate? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Is that the GOD we are called to love and to be "imitators of?" Assuredly not. He is misrepresented.

On the contrary is He not always trying to teach us lessons of love and tenderness, and setting us an example therein.

How patient with all sorts of us, men and women, is the Bible which He has given us. It gives a voice (and almost sanctions it) to so many whom we should disapprove and cast out. How often I have been tempted to censure those who are depressed and complaining, and doubting. But how tenderly GOD in the Bible deals with them. Strange to say, even those who reproach and misunderstand Him are not harshly dealt with.

Jeremiah was so over-borne by national sorrow

and disgrace that he could sometimes see nothing but misery and fear. He was wretched, though he was faithful to GOD.

David was almost in despair sometimes, feeling that he was forsaken, and that the burden of life was too heavy for him. He complained of the wickedness of others, in a way that we should not have expected, as he himself had fallen so low. Indeed his hatred of his enemies was of a kind that must not be copied by us. Yet the Bible finds an honourable place for his groans, without of course telling us to imitate them. And other Psalmists echoed his dismal complaints. For Job, too, there was pity and honour, though he was betrayed into reproaches of GOD which he afterwards felt were unseemly and wrong. Who can wonder that he so far fell, tried with the loss of all he loved, and then with the agony of his boils, and the unkind and goody-goody sermons of his friends? How glad one is to read that they were condemned, and Job praised by God, and his faults ignored. May we not say that God has a kind of respect for suffering, and willingly forgives the faults which it engenders, while pride and self-complacency are things which He cannot abide. Sermons are for the most part preached by those who are fairly prosperous, but the Bible often voices those who are unhappy and cast down. Sorrow has her honoured place in God's economy.

Let grief be her own mistress still,  
She loveth her own anguish deep,  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep. (*Tennyson.*)

As we get older we learn from the Bible and from experience to be more hopeful and also more kind.

How full of comfort is our religion! How priceless is the knowledge that we are all the offspring of God. His sons and daughters, partakers of the Divine nature. And that He is a faithful Creator, Who, in wisdom, love, and power, takes count of all that we are—our faults, our virtues, and our needs. He has made and He knows us. "All things are ours, and we are Christ's, and CHRIST is GOD'S." Nothing is too good for Him to do for us and in us. It is no wonder that a Salvation provided by such a GOD is so glorious and past all telling. And the well-meaning hymns which say it is wonderful that GOD should love us and save us, are certainly mistaken.

It is all beyond words, but I feel that something of its glory is told by the Sunday peals of bells which I am now listening too. I rejoice in their sweet tumult of joy. They are surely more of heaven than earth. What triumph, what might, what beauty, what tenderness, what hope, what ecstasy.

How they reveal GOD and His Kingdom to us. May we have ears to hear! May they bring us into such communion with Him that we shall find ourselves lost in Him, and thus be renewed with His life and His strength.

Experiences of happy service for Him are good, but I think that the best thing of all is quiet close communion with Him. For the best service is the result of such communion. How well the hymn puts it:—

Sweet the moments rich in blessing,  
Which before the cross we spend,  
Life and light and peace possessing,  
From the sinner's dying Friend.

Such moments must be longed for and sought and found, and retained as long as possible, and counted as our greatest treasure.

They are almost too sacred to be talked about, but I must copy out for you some of the beautiful verses known as the last words of Samuel Rutherford. He was a saint, and the prison by the sea where he was for CHRIST'S sake incarcerated, became so dear to him from the presence of his LORD that he scarcely wished to leave it even for the beloved town of Anworth, where his people and his Church were. His words are full of transport at the thought of the endless communion with GOD and with CHRIST which was just before him in heaven.

The sands of time are sinking,  
The dawn of Heaven breaks,  
The summer morn I've sighed for,  
The fair sweet morn awakes :  
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,  
But day-spring is at hand,  
And glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Oh ! well it is for ever,  
Oh ! well for evermore—  
My nest hung in no forest  
Of all this death-doomed shore :  
Yea, let the vain world perish,  
As from the ship we strand,  
While glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

There the Red Rose of Sharon  
Unfolds its heartsome bloom,  
And fills the air of Heaven  
With ravishing perfume :  
Oh ! to behold its blossom,  
While by its fragrance fann'd  
Where glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

The King there in His beauty,  
Without a veil is seen :  
It were a well spent journey,  
Though seven deaths lay between :  
The Lamb, with His fair army,  
Doth on Mount Zion stand,  
And glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Oh ! Christ He is the fountain,  
The deep sweet well of love !  
The streams on earth I've tasted,  
More deep I'll drink above :

There to an ocean fulness,  
His mercy doth expand,  
And glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Oft in yon sea-beat prison  
My Lord and I held tryst,  
For Anworth was not Heaven,  
And preaching was not Christ;  
And so my murkiest storm-cloud  
Was by a rainbow spann'd,  
Caught from the glory dwelling  
In Immanuel's land.

But that He built a Heaven  
Of His surpassing love,  
A little new Jerusalem,  
Like to the one above,—  
“Lord take me o'er the water,  
Had been my loud demand,  
Take me to love's own country,  
Unto Immanuel's land.”

The little birds of Anworth,  
I used to count them blest,—  
Now, beside happier altars  
I go to build my nest :  
O'er these there broods no silence,  
No graves around them stand,  
For glory deathless dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.



Fair Anworth, by the Solway,  
To me thou art still dear,  
E'en from the verge of Heaven,  
I drop for thee a tear.  
Oh ! if one soul from Anworth  
Meet me at God's right hand,  
My Heaven will be two Heavens,  
In Immanuel's land.

I've wrestled on towards Heaven,  
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide,  
Now, like a weary traveller  
That leaneth on his guide,  
Amid the shades of evening,  
While sinks life's lingering sand,  
I hail the glory dawning  
From Immanuel's land.

Deep waters cross'd life's pathway,  
The hedge of thorns was sharp ;  
Now, these lie all behind me—  
Oh ! for a well-tuned harp !  
Oh ! to sing Hallelujah  
With yon triumphant band,  
Who live where glory dwelleth,  
In Immanuel's land.

With mercy and with judgment  
My web of time He wove,  
And aye, the dews of sorrow  
Were lusted with His love ;—

I'll bless the Hand that guided,  
I'll bless the Heart that plann'd,  
When throned where glory dwelleth,  
In Immanuel's land.

Soon shall the cup of glory  
Wash down earth's bitt'rest woes.  
Soon shall the desert briar  
Break into Eden's rose ;  
The curse shall change to blessing—  
The name on earth that's bann'd  
Be graven on the white stone  
In Immanuel's land.

Oh ! I am my Beloved's,  
And my Beloved's mine !  
He brings a poor vile sinner  
Into His "house of wine :"  
I stand upon His merit,  
I know no other stand,  
Not e'en where glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

I shall sleep sound in Jesus,  
Fill'd with His likeness rise,  
To love and to adore Him,  
To see Him with these eyes :—  
'Tween me and resurrection  
But Paradise doth stand ;  
Then—then for glory dwelling  
In Immanuel's land.

The bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear bridegroom's face;  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of Grace—  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His pierced hand :—  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel's land.

I will try and tell you my own belief that I live by.

GOD is love, and CHRIST is the manifestation of GOD, the eternal Son of GOD; the image of GOD, and one with GOD. The belief that GOD is Almighty Love, and that He is here, there, and everywhere, for ever and ever, and that wherever GOD is there CHRIST may be realised, is a belief that covers most of our need. Let us see that we do truly believe it steadily. We may not always *feel* it, but let us be so convinced that it is true that it will serve us alike in cloud and sunshine, and in all our experience of life. The universal GOD is the *Home* of our soul, our rest, our hope, our life.

As to CHRIST, He is eternal with the Father. Without Him was not anything made that was made. So all the goodness that we ever know or see in creation is of CHRIST, and through CHRIST. And we can love and thank Him accordingly for all that is worthy of our love and admiration.

And now we will go on to another topic.

I hope you will go on asking questions as to any

difficulty in doctrine or practice which may trouble you. To-day I have only to answer the twenty-second question.

"I have a friend who habitually invokes the Virgin Mary and saints and angels, and who says that it is no more wrong to ask them to pray for us and help us, than to do so with living people whom we know." What should we say to this?

I rather hope that this will be the last time that I shall have to deal with this sort of question, for it verges on the controversial, which I wish to avoid. I think I can best answer it by quoting to you part of the 1898 charge of the late Archbishop Temple of Canterbury. The following are his words:

"The passage from asking an invisible being to help us is so dangerously near to putting such a being in a Divine position that our Church dare not, and will not, run the risk. There is nothing like such prayers in the Bible, and the Church of England will not permit them to her members. And for these reasons, and for other reasons like these, the Church of England has swept away all worship except the worship of GOD Himself. No worship is allowed, even to the mother of our LORD, the Blessed Virgin. No worship is allowed to any apostles, no invocation to any of the saints . . . . The worship of the saints prevailed in the church for many centuries; but the church has a right to learn by experience, and experience has shown that the practice is dangerous, and that our church is therefore justified in returning

to the usages of the Apostles, and of the Apostolic ages, when such practices were unknown.

The one thing that can be said for such worship—a worship of those good and holy men who have passed away from this present life—is that it seems to give reality to the belief in the Communion of saints living and departed. It appears to substitute a whole kingdom of living and loving fellow members of the Church behind the veil, for the darkness which now seems to stand before us while we think of those who have departed this life. The other world seems easier to believe in when it is not only peopled with those who have gone there from amongst us, with apostles, with martyrs, with leaders of the faith, and with holy men and women. But it is also thought that all these are able to hear us, and know what is happening to us, and possibly may be able to help us, if by no other means, at any rate by their prayers. No man can wonder at the strong attraction which has made, and still makes, some Christians long to join in apparently so beautiful a form of Christian devotion. But the basis of all this, after all, is not knowledge but imagination.

All prayers to any but GOD Himself in the three Persons of the Trinity, and all invocations addressed to those who are passed away from this present life, are alike condemned by the Church of England, and are not allowed to her members. But to pass on—There is, of course, a very great difference between praying *to* the departed, and praying *for* them.

They are in GOD'S hands, but it is possible He may allow our prayers to help them, and we cannot point out any evil that is likely to come from such prayers. We do not know what is happening to them in the other world. We cannot tell what they may need in order to be fitted for the final entrance into perfect peace. We are told that there will be at the last day some whose work will be burnt, but who will themselves be saved, and we see men die who seem to be forgiven, but nevertheless are so full of imperfections that we can hardly believe them yet fit for heaven. They are not sanctified. They have not that holiness without which none can see the LORD. We have no right to invent accounts of the way by which they may be purified. . . . The manner, the process of that change is not made known. To pray for the dead is not forbidden by the New Testament, and it is not forbidden by the Church of England, and our Ecclesiastic Courts accordingly have so decided it. In our private prayers there is nothing in the Church of England teaching to forbid our prayers for those whom we love, and are gone before us. But in our public worship there is need of that kind of reticence which restrains the knowledge, and which perpetually acknowledges our own ignorance."

I believe that these sound and common sense words of the Archbishop will commend themselves to all those of us who are exercised about the matter.

The Bible and the Prayer Book are our only absolutely safe rules in this, as in other matters,

though we may also be largely guided by common sense and by experience. And the Bible gives no authority, or precedent, for invoking saints or angels. On the contrary, we find that in Col. ii., 16-23, and Rev. xix. 10, the worship of angels is forbidden. The Prayer Book tells us in the 22nd Article that the doctrine is vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but is rather repugnant to the Word of God.

If such a practice were to be followed, the Bible would surely have exhorted us to follow it. But unless the saints are like GOD omnipresent, and able to hear prayers all over the world, what is the use of praying to them?

The doctrine is held by spiritualists that souls may be called up and spoken with, and it is curious how futile the specimens given us are of the supposed talk of those who while they lived were sensible and talented people. It would be indeed sad if Shakespeare, Bacon, Charles Dickens, and numbers of others, had so declined as to say the silly things which they are alleged to say. Spiritualism is rather "gone out," I think, and I am glad of it.

But the Roman Catholic belief as to the efficacy of prayers to the dead, seems to me chiefly dangerous because it shifts our faith in GOD, and our intimacy with CHRIST, to a trust in more or less legendary persons, who are in fact put into much the same position as the idols of Hinduism. The Virgin Mary has, to a large extent, been exalted by the Roman

Church into the place of GOD and CHRIST. And the saints and angels have been made like attendant deities who hear and answer prayers and who perform miracles of healing and deliverance. GOD the Father, and CHRIST the SAVIOUR, have avowedly become, with many Roman Catholics, far less important than the Blessed Virgin, who has a tender and indulgent heart, and who is always ready to intercede for her suppliants. Is not such a belief most dishonouring to our SAVIOUR and to GOD, Who *is Love*? It all comes so near to the sin of idolatry that sometimes the two can scarcely be distinguished from each other. In India I found the people actually confused their goddess, Seeta, with the Virgin Mary.

It is a grievous thing to have the heart, with its gratitude and love, turned away from GOD to a multitude of souls and spirits for whose powers and presence we have no warrant. Is CHRIST indifferent and unloving to us that we should turn from Him to such saints as St. Thomas a Becket, St. Gertrude, St. Thomas Aquinas, and hundreds of others?

I am far from saying that we may not be conscious of the presence and service of angels. Are they not "sent forth to minister" to us, and shall we not be grateful? Nor will I say that those whom we have loved on earth may not often be near to us, and bless us with their prayers and love and sympathy. Perhaps they can sometimes hear us speak, or read the language of our hearts, for they abide in CHRIST, Who knows all, and Who perpetu-



ally blesses us. But for the most part there is a veil over the unseen, and a peril in lifting it. If we had the power of forcing departed souls to prematurely converse with us, it might be at great loss to themselves. "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" said the spirit of Samuel to Saul.

The unseen world has its laws as truly as the visible world. Both may be disobeyed. It is not well for us to step into the dark without a distinct Divine warrant. If it is withheld there must be a reason for it.

There is one beautiful passage which tells us (Hebrews 12, 22, 23, 24) that we are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and into an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling.

Surely this is riches enough, and we can be content with it till we pass within the veil and behold with opened eyes the delights of heaven. Meanwhile I have no doubt that the departed saints do pray for us and help us as much as they can, whether we ask them to do so or not. We on earth pray for our friends without their asking us to do so. It is sometimes urged by earnest people that the danger nowadays is so great of people believing nothing that it is best not to discourage people in *any* sort of faith, even if it is a mistaken faith.

Is this, however, a sound principle? I think not. Truth must always be given the first place by those who have the Divine love of it.

It may be discussed whether it is worse to believe nothing, or to believe what is false. In most false beliefs there are some elements of truth which partially redeem them, but I have no hesitation in saying that it is better to believe nothing than to believe what is entirely untrue. Errors start from either ignorance or sin, and sooner or later they bring forth evil in different degrees. A religion that only means protesting against evil and falsehood is a poor empty thing—almost bad. But not to protest against evil and untruth is also bad. Let us take CHRIST as our pattern in this matter, though we may never attain to His holy vehemence. GOD forbid that we should ever make terms with any evil, whether it be cruelty, superstition, sensuality, pride, ignorance, or selfishness. Many people do not fully know the delight there is in absolute faithfulness to truth. May it pervade our whole lives and every department of our lives.

Our answer therefore to those who ask if the Bible and the Church of England give any warrant for praying to departed souls is "No." At the same time let us judge those who differ from us with a wide charity. With the recent revelations of wireless telegraphy it has become difficult to say how far thought and desire may penetrate.

We are now getting close to the time of our Sep-

tember move. Many of us will be changing stations, and the time of farewell is often a very important time. The people have learned to love their officer, and it is an opportunity to get those who are "almost persuaded" to come to a decision and to accept our LORD definitely as their Saviour and their Master. So many seem to come just short of doing this. Try to get a personal talk and prayer with any of whom you have hopes. Think over them *now* by name and ask GOD'S counsel and guidance about them. When you leave see that everything is in order for your successor. Let the list of workers and Gazette sellers be complete, and give any necessary advice in confidence to the next officer as to dangerous people, &c. Sometimes our allies and fellow-workers cause us more anxiety than outsiders!

This month is almost the best for making plans for the work, and for starting fresh methods. Let those be wise who mean to win souls. Pray for compelling power for conversion. I would always rather hear of one definite case of someone who had been indifferent and godless, turning clearly into a true and evident Christian, confessing CHRIST and working for Him—than of a general feeling of what is called "blessing" without any individual results.

And now I must bring this letter to a close. I send with it a postscript on the important subject of the opium trade, about which every man and woman ought to feel strongly, and to help as far as possible.

GOD bless and prosper you.

E.C.

July, 1902.

DEAR COMRADES,

To-day begins my annual holiday. I have spent the first 14 hours of it in the train, and am finishing it in Italy. I have the list of your names, Captains and Nurses, with me, and I am bringing you one by one before God, with prayers and thanksgiving. The thought of you all gives me a happy time. I feel that even in heaven we shall remember with joy and gratitude the work we were called to do in the Church Army, and the friendships which were begun in it. Sometimes I am almost tempted to envy you the privilege of having to spend your lives in direct conversion work. But to everyone God gives His own particular gift, and my gifts are not preaching and evangelising, so much as preparing the way for others to preach.

"Do the work of an evangelist" is, I believe, God's word to each of you, as surely as it was (through St. Paul) to Timothy. Be very careful how you abandon such service for anything else. Doubtless there are moments when most of us wonder (remembering our shortcomings and faults) whether we are in the right path. But God does not let the man or woman, who honestly commits all to Him, go far astray. Generally speaking, our chosen work is the *right* work, only we

must feel with humility how much better it might be done.

It is wonderful how rules keep us straight if we walk straight on (watching and praying), and "do the next thing." Quiet, humble, obedience day by day, is the best preparation for a great heroic deed when it comes to us to be done. Even a little virtue, like punctuality helps to fit us for a great call to service, and the fault of unpunctuality—which seems to some people so small—seriously *unfits* a man or woman for important work. If you keep a hundred people waiting for six minutes, you have wasted 600 minutes of their time, that is 10 hours. What a fine quality it was in our late Queen Victoria, that she never kept anybody waiting a minute, but was always exactly up to time.

Are you punctual as to your prayer time? Do you use our prayer card, or pray on its principles, which are Christ's principles? I hope and believe that many of you often thank God for the rules and regulations of our Society as to early rising, hours of work, uniform, visiting books, and other things. What a safeguard they are!

I want to talk to you a little to-day on the following subject:—

#### WHAT IS THE USE OF TEMPTATION?

Or, rather, what are its *uses*?—for they are many. I think that, perhaps its chief use is to make Christ more and more real and personal to us. *He delivers*. And if we have slipped or fallen, He forgives and

cleanses. And by this revelation of Himself it comes to pass that we get to know Him better than we know anyone else, and to depend on Him accordingly.

Any price is surely worth paying for the knowledge of Christ as Saviour and Friend. How powerless to upset us is all the unbelief of the world, when we have proved His nearness and His succour on occasions when we have been tempted and weak! We *could* not disbelieve in Him if we wanted to, and God knows it would be pain and death to us to if we could.

We know Him by His daily gifts given to us and to His world, but our experience of Him as the Deliverer in the times of our spiritual need and besetment, means a closer and more personal friendship than is gained even through the best outward gifts. The infidel may have his theories, which are hard for us to argue against, but he cannot persuade us that Christ has *not* been at our right hand, to deliver us in temptation, and afterwards to shine upon us with His own Light and Presence.

Peter, no doubt, knew that it was Christ Who sent the shoal of fishes into his net, but the Hand that caught him and saved him as he was sinking in the sea of Galilee, was a much more undeniable proof of Him.

We may also reap this priceless fruit of intimacy with Christ through trials of unkindness, coldness, or ingratitude. Who can say that such sorrows are not worth having? Let us not waste them or misuse

them, but let us be thankful for them and make the most of them. There is a new peace and strength that comes to our soul, when we have felt the sting of injustice, or ingratitude, and have remedied it by forgiveness and love. It is Divine life and grace which make it possible to do this. What a pity and shame, and loss it is if we forget or neglect to refer such trials at once to Christ! For the eye uplifted to Him lightens as it discerns what He bore, and how He bore it. I declare to you that there is *no bitterness* which cannot thus be turned to *sweetness*.

Our *only* trouble really is *sin*, and the dreadful thing about sin is that it is a wicked choice between good and evil, between Christ and Satan. It *seems* almost impossible that there should be forgiveness for sins committed so many times from wilfulness, weakness, or passions. To know we are thinking, or saying, or doing evil, and yet to *sin*, is awful. "God, God, forgive us all." We have no excuse—unless it be an excuse that we were born sinners. If it were not that we remember the sin of Peter, David, Abraham, and others, we should almost despair. I believe that sin always means loss, and loss that—in one sense—is irreparable. But even here the healing, and restoring, and inspiring powers of Christ come in, and His grace and love ever find a home in repentant hearts and lives. There they can blossom and cast their seed.

Another result of temptation—even when it is triumphantly resisted—is humility. Dear comrades, as you get older, do you not feel the strength of down-

right humility, of knowing your weakness and your liability even to disgraceful sin? What a loss it is when good people do *not* feel this, when they boast of their clean hearts instead of bowing their heads with the wholesome sense of their need and sinfulness. I have known many dear good people who testified that they were good, but I have never known one of the *best* people talk in that strain. A holy instinct forbids it.

Surely one of the greatest safeguards against pride is the knowledge of our sad liability to be tempted and to fall.

How humbling, for instance, is the temptation to temper—the knowledge that we have lowered and disgraced ourselves by it—and that everybody is aware of it. I pity people more than I can say, whose besetting sin is temper, for even when they are right they often put themselves in the wrong, and give an advantage to unworthy adversaries. If they know this, and sorrow for it, then their character often becomes extremely beautiful. But if they get the character of being bad tempered, proud and wounding, what a scandal they become! We all know such people, and, I hope, we behave kindly and pityingly to them. But we know that they are unfit for the highest service, and that their weakness must, alas! always be counted on.

And it is just the same with other temptations—the liability to impurity (even if it be only in thought) is most humbling, and yet it is salutary; for who



judges another's sin so wisely as the one—like Christ—who knows what it is to be tempted in all points, and yet has overcome?

It is an awful sin for one, who knows that he himself has fallen, to judge another harshly, proudly, and unkindly—as the Pharisees judged the woman taken in adultery.

Always judge others in the light of your own secret faults—*confessed and forgiven*—and yet with the memory of them fresh. Then you will be kind and humble, even while you are firm and just. It is not easy or pleasant to judge others. And sometimes lighter faults have to be treated more severely than grievous sins. A serious indiscretion, or a careless and half ignorant fall into intemperance, may incapacitate a man or woman for Christian work more than a respectable sin like selfishness, or pride, or coldness; which nevertheless may be really and in God's sight much worse.

A person may give way to wicked, unkind, or impure thoughts, without being known or judged by man, and yet the character may be really damaged and deteriorated far more than by an open sin: which (as St. Paul says) “goes before to judgment.”

Sooner or later, God's high tribunal has to be faced. Let us anticipate its verdict, and live accordingly. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” I. Cor. ii., 31.

And now we will pass on to our Scripture lesson.

## THE BUILDING OF THE WALL.

Some years ago I was travelling in a far away country. Early one morning we left a low sultry plain, and began to ascend a rocky hill. All day we rode along a narrow path, and the rain poured down in torrents. But towards evening it ceased, and I, who happened to be in advance of the party, found myself passing through a little village shaded by almond and peach trees, and then riding to the top of the hill on which it was built. When I reached the summit I saw before me a view which I can never forget. The hill slanted down in front of me through plantations of olive trees to a little stream. In the valley was a garden with some old gnarled olive trees. On the opposite side the hill rose steeply and I saw that it was studded with hundreds of gravestones. On its heights was a gloriously beautiful city, which looked almost more like a vision than a reality. It was wet with the rain, but the sun had come out and made it shine and glitter. Encircling it was a great wall, inside of which I saw temples, and towers, and domes. Above the city was a long low line of distant hills.

Perhaps you have guessed that the city was Jerusalem. I was on the Mount of Olives, I had passed Bethany, opposite me was the valley of Jehosaphat, and below me was the brook Kedron, and the garden of Gethsemane.

I did not wonder as I gazed at Jerusalem that it should be regarded almost with worship by the Jews

and Israelites, whose capital it was, or that they should love to have their bodies brought home from all over the world and interred outside its walls.

Many times it has been ruined and sacked ! It was terribly devastated about 500 years before Christ was born, and its inhabitants were many of them carried captive to Persia. Among them was Nehemiah, a man of devotion, courage, and ability. Wherever he had been he would probably have risen to a good position, and it was not long before he became cup-bearer to the King and enjoyed his confidence and favour. One day he was visited at Susa by some friends who had come from Palestine and he eagerly asked them for news of the Jews and of Jerusalem. Their reply was most depressing. They said that the wall of the city was broken down, that the gates were burnt, and that the people were in great affliction. Nehemiah felt it acutely, and he poured forth his heart to God confessing the nation's sin and beseeching forgiveness and restoration. Shortly afterwards he was called to attend on the King, who, observing his sadness asked him the cause. Nehemiah told the facts, and then silently prayed. And God so touched the King's heart that he sent him to put matters right in Jerusalem. He even gave him men and horses to accompany him, and an order for timber and other necessaries.

There is, perhaps, no story in the Old Testament which fits in more exactly with our experience than the story of how Nehemiah built the walls and gates.

of the half ruined Jerusalem. It is a wonderful illustration of Church Army work beginning in a hard and difficult parish. And the record of it has cheered and helped many a C.A. Officer, who has learnt by it that the same trials and temptations which beset him have been met and conquered by others long ago.

We read that after his interview with the King, Nehemiah came to Jerusalem and remained there quietly for three days, considering what was to be done. This reminds us of the words: "Be still and know that I am God." He rode all round the city, and he viewed the ruin of the place—broken down and burnt with fire. Then he called the Jews together, and with inspiring words he urged them to rise and build. Thus does the C.A. Captain gather his workers together for business. They went to work in earnest, and we find in the third chapter of Nehemiah how well and carefully the work was organised.

And then there came seven great hindrances and difficulties, which still keep happening in Christian work to us more than 2,000 years later. It is wonderful!

The first difficulty which came was one so potent that often Satan has not to try another. At Jerusalem there were living certain bitter enemies of the Jews—Sanballat, the Horonite; Tobiah, the "servant, the Ammonite"; Geshem, the Arabian; and others. When they saw the beginning of the work they were very angry, but they pretended to have no fear that Nehemiah would ever succeed,

"What do these feeble Jews?" said Sanballat. "Will

they fortify, will they sacrifice, will they clear away these mountains of rubbish?" And Tobiah, as he stood by said sneeringly, that even a jackal would be strong enough to break down their stone wall. Thus, nowadays, do enemies of true Christian work despise it.

It is good discipline for us Church Army people to have sometimes to endure contempt. But it is very galling for a young Captain, who comes to his work full of hope and gladness, to be looked down on and disapproved of by men of authority in the parish. "Is it likely that a young working man will succeed where we with all our experience and education have failed? Talk about conversion! We will see how long his converts *last*!" And a wicked triumph is felt if a wretched drunkard goes back to his cups—goes back till love and kindness and God's power win him a second, or third, or hundredth time. We know Who the good Shepherd is Who seeks the lost sheep till He finds it and brings it safely home!

Nehemiah knew how to deal with this difficulty of mockery. Instantly he turned to God and committed it to Him. And the bitterness of it was of course assuaged.

Do we all know what it is to be despised and held cheap? Sad it is when those who ought to be our friends are scornful at us. Generally it is jealousy which makes them almost wish that a temptation, as small as a jackal, should be enough to make the new convert break down and get bedraggled again in the mud. But they are giving way to a fiendish sin.

Perhaps, too, the Captain feels that he is weak and feeble, and, like Jeremiah, almost "a child." Perhaps he is praying very hard for the longed-for conversion power, and is sad because he feels that he has so little of it.

Mockery is hard to bear. How many soldiers have I known in our Army who have been held back from confessing Christ, because they feared the scorn and mockery of their companions.

But Nehemiah did not for one moment think of giving in. Again he cried to God for help and deliverance. He won the victory *within*, and he and his men went on steadily building the wall.

When mockery failed, their enemies tried persecution. They became very wroth and conspired together to hinder the work by open opposition. How bitter Satan makes his servants against God's work! Here again, prayer was the weapon; prayer and watching too, for Nehemiah set part of his people to watch their enemies and to fight them while the rest laboured on at the wall.

Many of us know what it is to endure downright persecution for Christ's sake. Many a situation has been lost because a Christian knew that he must now give up cheating and lying, and must live honestly, even if it means infuriating his employers and fellow-workers. The very means of living has had to be abandoned for Christ's sake. But the Christian knows that it is *always possible* to do right.

Then came the third difficulty, and that was one

with which most of us are, unhappily, familiar. Our worst troubles are from within and not from without, and we now read that the Jews themselves became discouraged and said that their "strength was decayed," that the rubbish was more than they could get rid of, and that they would never be able to build the wall. How natural, but how untrue, was this fear! Those who are on God's side can never fail, He never sets us a task which we cannot fulfil. The wear and tear of work is often no doubt trying to body, mind, and soul, and nerve, but a time of victory is surely coming to everyone who is on God's side. Nehemiah's words to the discouraged Jews were noble: "Be not ye afraid, remember the Lord which is great, and fight for your brethren." Then the Spirit of God came upon the people and they went back to their work. And while half of them watched, the other half laboured, keeping their swords duly girded by their side. "God shall fight for us," said Nehemiah. And so He did. The men laboured steadily on, knowing that the victory would be theirs.

Some of us know what a dreadful trial it is to be depressed from ill-health—perhaps biliousness, or liver trouble. "My heart is overwhelmed with fear," said David, "and a horrible fear hath overwhelmed me." It is hard fighting, but Christ can give us the victory. I have often told you what a talisman I have found in these sovereign words: "In everything give thanks." They have brought me through the worst troubles I ever had.

And now, when mockery, persecution, and discouragement had failed, there came a worse trial still.

The 5th chapter is taken up with the sad subject of "The cry against brethren." Our deepest and severest wounds are given by those who are our brethren. No other wounds ache like these. Coldness, selfishness, ingratitude, and jealousy, from those who have our hearts, are harder to bear than the most furious onslaught from avowed enemies.

The grievance detailed in the 5th chapter of Nehemiah came from greed, which has always been the besetting sin of the Jewish nation. It was successfully dealt with by Nehemiah, who treated the offenders with firmness, courage, and gentleness. Their amenableness to his reproof evidently resulted largely from the high respect which they had for him. And the triumph of right seems to have been complete.

It meant, however, very plain and faithful dealing, and it meant humiliation and self-denial for the wrong doers. But they were true men, and they trusted their leader and they obeyed him. We thank you, dear brothers and sisters, that you have grace to trust us at Headquarters, even if you do not always understand the full reasons for our actions. I think you will not regret trusting us, and I want you to remember that we will gladly hear from you and answer you if you know of any grievances. I have now been in the Church Army twenty years, and I think I can say that not often has an officer been treated unkindly or unjustly—and certainly never



*knowingly* so. But God knows we are all apt to err, to make mistakes, and even to sin.

Quarrelling failed, as the other evils had failed, and now the wall was built and there was no breach left in it, though the doors were not set up. And Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem became more and more malicious. And they decided that if they won the victory it must be by subtilty and by corrupting Nehemiah. So they made their plans. They sent to him to ask him to meet them in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. Perhaps they invited him for recreation, for pleasure, and for company. But Nehemiah knew well that *mischief* was in it. "I will not meet you," he replied, "in these villages in the plain of Ono. I am doing a great work. I cannot come down and leave it." And though they sent to him four times, yet his reply was always the same. The temptation to worldliness failed as completely as the four previous temptations had failed. Often it happens that while we are despised and persecuted, and even discouraged, a great work goes on in God's sight, but with prosperity there comes slackness. A worldly spirit creeps in, and Christians cease to watch and to pray as carefully as they used to do. Treacherous enemies urge them to join with them in evil amusements and so their character deteriorates, and they become comparatively worthless in the battle. Sometimes the love of money comes in and damages the soul. It is difficult to say exactly *what* worldliness is, each one

must judge for himself—guided by God's Holy Spirit. I would only say that I am much struck with the way in which God seems to seal the Church Army rules which have been made on the subject of certain secular amusements. I have seldom known our rule broken without evil consequences following.

And now even more spiteful methods were used against Nehemiah and his work. Sanballat sent his servant to him a fifth time with an open letter where it was written that there was a report that Nehemiah was urging the Jews to rebel in order that he himself might be their king. It was a shameful calumny without the slightest foundation for truth. Sanballat deceitfully pretended to be Nehemiah's friend and to wish to save him. But Nehemiah knew better. He gave him the lie direct, and I suppose that Sanballat must have been ashamed and confounded. And then Nehemiah seems to have paid no more attention to the matter but just to have gone on with his work. And this is often the best way to treat a calumny. On the whole less harm is done to us by evil speaking than might be supposed. The world outside judges our characters pretty truly, and judges also the characters of our traducers, and I do not think I can recall many C.A. officers, men or women, who have been seriously damaged by calumny. But if they get excited about it, and so full of justifications that their work is neglected, then Satan gains his point. I was once influenced by evil speaking against a dear friend of

mine. I never found out how far the charges against him were true, but my loyalty to him was secretly affected, and I regret it and grieve over it to this day.

And here I may mention that Nehemiah—though so excellent—was not perfect, any more than good men nowadays are perfect. His egotism is a flaw in the story, though it is so naive and open that one half excuses it. Still it amounted to a kind of religious selfishness, which certainly was un-Christlike, and which compares unfavourably with what we know of such saints as Joseph, Daniel, St. John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary, who seem to have forgotten themselves in their enthusiasm for what had to be done. There is always something small about personal ambitions. They are undoubtedly a great motive power in this poor fallen world, but how we admire the men and women who care so much for their cause that they have no room for caring about their own rewards. This egotism takes many forms. I met a gifted and valuable person once, who was partly spoiled because she seldom listened or received from anyone, but was always bestowing. She was a little too peremptory, too certain, and too determined to be obeyed. She would have gained much in power and influence if she would have kept the balance between declaring and listening, between giving out and taking in, between commanding and obeying. It was egotism, and everybody recognized it as such. The power of a balanced man or woman is great. I

know a few of them, and some are among our Captains and Mission-Nurses.

After all, in this life most of us are only a kind of germ, to be developed later into something beautiful. And yet our ugliness is perhaps fitted to this temporary fallen condition. Nehemiah's self praise certainly gives an air of secondrateness to his narrative. His eagerness for his virtues to be taken into account is unsatisfactory. But who is without fault? Let us always remember that great deeds are done by faulty people. Nehemiah was a true deliverer and a good and blessed man.

One more effort Sanballat made to damage or to stop the work—a foolish effort foredoomed to failure—he tried to tempt Nehemiah to cowardice. He sent a message to him, "I have discovered a plot to kill you. They are going to slay you in the night. Come and hide for safety in the temple of God. I am your friend, and I warn you." But Nehemiah, by the Spirit of God, perceived that he was lying. "Should such a man as I flee?" said he, "should I go into the temple to save my life? I will not go."

Sometimes after long conflict and work a man loses his nerve, and may succumb even to a temptation as foreign to his character as cowardice was to Nehemiah's. So perhaps Tobiah and Sanballat may have had more sense in trying to frighten him than seems probable. At any rate they failed. And with this seventh danger Satan's harrassings came to an end. And the victory came which is bound to

come to all those who faithfully obey their Master. *The wall was finished*, and the city of Jerusalem stood strong in the beauty, which was afterwards viewed by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And then all opposers heard of it, and all the heathen that were round about heard of it too. And they came and looked at the city, and their bitter hearts were crushed with shame and vexation. And they perceived and admitted that this great work must have been *wrought by God Himself*.

Brothers and sisters, may such be the consummation of your Church Army work. May mockery, persecution, discouragement, quarrelling, worldliness, calumny, and cowardice be all in vain to hinder it, and may the testimony, even of outsiders, be that God Himself must have inspired you to do it.

"The battle is not ours, but God's."

I like to tell you that I got the principal points of this lesson many years ago from that true and holy man—Sir Arthur Blackwood.

Since I last wrote to you we have, alas, lost a friend of the Church Army—Lady Augusta Noel. She became one of the most saintly persons that I have ever known, and her husband—one of our valued vice-presidents—told me that her long and painful illness, which reduced her almost to a shadow, was like a transfiguration. I begged her not to write me letters, for I knew they would exhaust her too much, but to write me sometimes a text to keep in my Bible. I think of her as I sit at my window this morning in

the old Italian town of Sienna. I look out on the sunny landscape and see grey mountains behind green wheatfields, and vineyards with tall cypresses, and olive trees growing in them. And I read again the words which she wrote for me not long before she died:—

“That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and height, and to know the love of Christ *which passeth knowledge*, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”

“They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

“Fear not, for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. *Thou art Mine*. Since thou wast precious in My sight I have loved thee, thou hast been honourable. Fear not, thou art Mine.”

Once more I wish to speak to you of the beautiful virtue of loyalty under difficulties. There is little or no credit in being loyal to those who are perfectly good; but tried loyalty (like that of Shakespeare's Falconbridge to the false and wretched King John) is a splendid quality; and I know Officers who have this kind of loyalty to unworthy men who are over them. It goes with perfect truthfulness, but yet it is absolute.

How surely it is known if a man is disloyal. There

are just *one or two* Officers who have the fault of disloyalty to Headquarters, and I think very likely they believe we are not aware of it. But the truth is that everybody who knows us fairly well knows our faults. I have no doubt that you know mine. Of course, we don't either wish or expect that Officers should be blind to the faults of Headquarters, that would be foolish. But we do thank God that nearly every Officer is loyal to us. Disloyal men may do good work and be valued by us, but how much more happily and successfully they work if their conscience is perfectly clear from the faults of gossip and evil speaking. At any rate they may be sure of one thing, that Christ's words will come true that what is whispered secretly is somehow sure to be, sooner or later, proclaimed upon the housetops, so let us take care what we say. I was once, long ago, at a breakfast of exceedingly good religious gentlemen, and they were talking against somebody. "*He is backsliding,*" said our leading man. And as he said it the door opened and in the man came smiling and greeting us all friendlily. I shall always remember the particular sort of silence which ensued. How uncomfortable everyone felt!

E.C.





*January, 1903.*

DEAR COMRADES,—

We are now wishing one another "God bless you" and "a happy New Year." The midnight bells we heard last night were full of promise and cheer, and we thank God with overflowing hearts.

Be assured that on New Year's Eve I have been remembering each one of you with prayers and thanksgivings. May God deepen in every one of us that true, daily repentance for past faults, which means strength and comfort for the future. May His indwelling Spirit inspire us day by day. How much I want and need these gifts myself!

I believe He will give us the best New Year we have ever had. May His Will be wholly fulfilled in us and by us. May the blood of Christ—His very Life—be cleansing us continually.

You will like the New Year's greeting which reaches you with this. I got the Italian picture of the Praying Soldier (by Pinturicchio) for you at Sienna, last spring. He is evidently a holy and yet businesslike man, and he has the stamp of his Divine Master on him. He has a "shining face" though he is not actually smiling.

God has brought us into close and happy touch with each other; and I value your letters more than I can say. Time flies, and God knows how long we

shall all be together here. But our friendship will last on for ever.

Christ tells us that the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven. We know how the meal, when it receives the leaven, gradually alters its character, and has every quality changed. And so it is, when men receive Christ, they receive a new Life and a new Ideal. They little guess how much of death and of life the reception of Him means. Slowly, without observation, He takes possession and becomes Master. Selfishness gets slowly eliminated, and ambition has its course altered. Always there is this beautiful Ideal before the soul. How much we owe to it—to the Divine Pattern to which we lift our eyes. It gradually brings all diverse characters towards its own likeness. Sometimes the pattern is neglected, but it is always there, and always for blessing. God's people often wonder to find after an absence, how like each other they are becoming.

We cannot measure how much even the godless world owes to Christ. Crimes of lust and cruelty which were once rampant are no longer able to flaunt themselves, but have to hide away in dark corners, and even His enemies are unconsciously influenced by His standard.

All His holy and Divine sayings and doings are before our minds and hearts, and are slowly shaping things to their own resemblance.

Let us take as our subject this New Year's Day,

THE FRIENDSHIPS OF CHRIST.

For what can better help and inspire us than to be thinking of Him and thus receiving Him afresh?

God's way is to give to us in proportion to our capacity and our willingness to receive.

The sun shines equally on a man and a tree, and a stone, but how different its effects are!

To the man, the sun means life, power, and intelligence. To the tree it means life, growth, and value. To the stone it means almost nothing, for the stone does not receive life, but only warmth, and perhaps a garment of green moss or silver lichen.

So, when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, was walking the earth, His effectiveness depended on the manner and degree in which souls received Him. And thus it is now. He Himself taught us this lesson in the parable of the Sower, where He describes the four kinds of ground on which the seed fell. He was the same Christ to all. But to the Pharisees, the priests, and the rulers, He was a stone of stumbling, and an occasion for greater wickedness, while to His true disciples He was Life and joy, and righteousness, and power, and all that was worth living and dying for.

To the multitude who followed Him ignorantly and selfishly, He brought benefits and blessings far beyond what they knew. He was always sowing seeds for them, which, by and bye, were to spring up for blessing. Even for opposing Pharisees there must have been good in preparation. At all events, we know of *one* Pharisee who was a bitter opposer, but who was changed when the time came (not many months after

Calvary); into a lover of the Lord, a saint, and a martyr.

Let us, then, consider the different relationships of souls to Christ. For He is still with us, and as men and women were then, so we are to-day.

Firstly, there was the multitude who followed Him—the people who were, so far, on His side that their adhesion protected Him for a time from the malice of His foes. These people felt, in a degree, His love and power, though they did not half understand Him. They listened to Him, they received His gifts of food and healing, and from them there were gathered, from time to time, His true disciples.

For the multitude Christ's heart overflowed with pity and grace. He loved all the thousands of average humanity. He loved their children. He considered their needs. He *served* them, and they were His, for He had created them, and He was going to die for them.

But all the time He knew that their transient goodwill could not be depended on. It was ignorant and capricious, and yet He valued it as worth *something*. He rejoiced when they honoured Him with palm leaves and strewn garments, and hosannas, though He was aware that in a few hours this same multitude would be persuaded to turn against Him. In fact, He valued popularity at its true and somewhat despicable worth. How tender He was to the weak, the tempted, and the sinful! Almost in the same breath with which He told His disciples of their coming desertion of

Him, He bade them "not to let their hearts be troubled." Most of us have felt the pain of ingratitude, and have wondered that long continued careful kindness should sometimes be so suddenly repaid with coldness or dislike. Perhaps the fault may occasionally be with ourselves, but there is no doubt that to low natures, gratitude is irksome and distasteful. A very little criticism of what is amiss, will outweigh a long record of benevolence and self-denying attention. On the other hand, we often get a great deal more gratitude than we either expect or deserve. The moral is "do not work for gratitude, but take it when it comes, and be thankful." I am often surprised that rich people will sometimes give us any amount of trouble about a case which concerns them, and will not even trouble to say "thank you," when the work is done. And this is often true of other people besides the rich.

Probably the fault of ingratitude is common in every class. Sometimes it just means selfishness, as in the case of the nine lepers, who only cared to be healed, and gave no thought or thanks afterwards to the Healer—Christ found "all sorts" in the multitude.

We too have our "multitude" in every Church Army station, and it is for them that we have chosen to live and to work. We are their servants, ever desiring to bless them, and to win them, and we subject ourselves for their sakes to the pain of occasional coldness, unkindness, treachery, or rejection. (The keenest sorrows, however, are not inflicted by the multitude, for not

much is *expected* from them.) Popularity is after all a poor and changeable thing, and I believe most of us know this, and do not seek it or value it at a great price. Christ scarcely cared for it, but often seemed rather to dislike it and to get out of its way. His delight was to love and to help persons, and He seems to have generally let alone the question of what return they gave Him. Our business as Christian men and women lies much more in loving people and helping them, than in counting up their love and gifts to us. When we have learnt this we are proof against half the sorrows and mortifications of life.

This power of loving humanity is one of the greatest qualities which a man or woman can possess. Again and again it shines like a torch in the world, and it influences history for generations. Let us pray that God may give it *in some degree* to each one of us. The instinct to care for those who are *related* to us by ties of blood, is of course almost universal, for "blood is stronger than water." And no doubt it is by God's good ordering that people generally stick to their kin, and are partial to them. But some persons possess the gift of being loving and beneficent to almost *all whom they meet*—good or bad, old or young, rich or poor. And here again Christ is our great ideal and example. I think it is a comfort and help to be *commanded* (as we are) to love one another, and even to love our enemies. For God never commands us to do that which is impossible. It is sometimes *difficult* to love, but one of the best ways to accomplish it is

to behave as if we loved. Then the love is very apt to begin on both sides. Study carefully the record of how Christ loved the multitude.

One of the most treasured stories in His life is that which recounts His sudden love for the rich young man who, alas! turned away from Him rather than renounce his wealth. "Jesus, beholding him, loved him." How beautiful is this spontaneous going out of the heart to another—a love not inspired necessarily by the deserts of the loved one, but by the grace of the one who loves. Perhaps, however, in this case there *was* much to attract in the young ruler—youth, and purity, and filial love, and an earnest (though not *sufficiently* earnest) desire after the best things. At any rate, Christ loved him, and one longs to know how far His love triumphed. The incident happened apparently only a few days before the crucifixion and the resurrection. What were the young man's thoughts during these events? Did he wish he had left all and followed Him? Did he become a real friend of Christ's?

The fallen woman who bathed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and of whom He tenderly testified that "she loved much," and that her sins which were many were forgiven, must reckon among His friends—a strange friend for Him to choose, it was thought. But He knew her heart, and His absolute purity made the friendship safe.

Capacity for friendship is one of the best qualities which we can possess, and it is noticeable how im-

portant a place friendships filled in Christ's life, and how united He was to His friends by love and by what we may call business. For one of the chief elements in a really great friendship is similarity of aim. Without this we cannot get far. We may be drawn very much to people by such qualities as intellect, beauty, and dignity, but the relationship will be only temporary if the purpose in life is wholly dissimilar to our own. But if the life's motive in two people is *that God's kingdom may come*, then there may be warm friendship between people of perfectly different characters, and gifts, and social standing.

We cannot doubt that Christ selected His twelve disciples with extreme care. I wonder how far His requirements for these young men were the same as our requirements in the Church Army. He needed no candidate forms, and no probation in Van work, for His Divine instinct never failed Him, and yet we hear of whole nights spent in prayer before His decisions were put in practice. How little we can guess His feelings when He choose Judas! How wonderful that that choice should have been His choice! But so it was. Judas had his awful use in the history of Christianity. The subject is enveloped in mystery, and not in this dispensation will that mystery be fathomed, and its final results made manifest. Judas is gone (as every one of us goes) to his own place. And God, Who knows all things, knows what that place is and will be.

I suppose it is impossible that all should not, more



or less, long to be as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." He loved *all*; but apparently there was a distinction felt and admitted among the others by which it was understood that the most intimate affection was accorded to St. John. Among the three—Peter, James, and John—his name comes last; but his insight as to his Master seems to have been deepest. His head lay on Christ's breast at the last supper. He stood faithful and undaunted at the Cross, to his care the mother of our Lord was entrusted, to him was apparently committed the special Gospel of Love, which he declares in his three epistles. And to him—a prisoner in Patmos—came the vision of Christ as He is in glory. We do not know whether he will ever occupy the post his mother begged for him. But if he does *not* get it, doubtless it will be because a better post will be his. How often it happens that what seems to us (early in our career) to be super-excellent, loses its attraction when we have nearly lived our lives. Personally I have no desire to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is supposed that Christ's first interview with St. John was that recorded in the second chapter of the fourth gospel. He is believed to have been the companion of Andrew, and to have with him followed Christ when their master John the Baptist, had pointed Him out to them as He walked—saying, "Behold the Lamb of God."

With the right instinct, they had already attached themselves to the best and holiest man they knew,

and they remained with him till he pointed them to One Who was greater and better than himself

It is a beautiful little story of seeking and finding good things, and of always passing on to the best that is discovered.

“They followed Jesus.”

And Jesus turned and beheld them following, and saith unto them, “What seek ye?”

And they said unto Him, “Rabbi, where abideth Thou?”

He said unto them, “Come and see.”

They came, therefore, and saw where He abode, and they abode with Him that day.

What they talked of we know not; but what happened was that immediately afterwards Andrew won a soul—he brought his own brother Peter to Christ.

It is a beautiful, sunshiny picture of joyful, affectionate, soul winning, and of delightful intercourse with Christ—following Him, walking with Him, abiding with Him, talking with Him, and working for Him. Happy young men! Happy Andrew and John, happy Peter, happy Philip and Nathaniel, and happy John the Baptist, glad to give up to Christ the disciples whom he had won! These five young men little knew how much it all meant for them. We find them afterwards pursuing their trade as fishermen on the blue lake of Galilee. Then comes to them Jesus, and calls them, and they forsake all and follow Him completely and for ever. Not without faults,

not even without a moment of dreadful, frightened desertion of Him, but yet truly and wholly. They counted the cost in the sunny morning of life, and henceforth they followed Him through evil and good report, through persecution and martyrdom itself.

It reminds me of our C.A. cadets in training.

“Our tasks in hours of insight willed,  
Can be in times of gloom fulfilled.”

Andrew Jukes has noticed the striking difference between this first recorded walk of disciples with Jesus, and the last walk recorded towards the end of St Luke's Gospel. The first is all sunshine and happiness, and its result is that a soul is won for the Lord. In the walk to Emmaus all is reversed. The disciples were filled with gloom and disappointment, and they were walking away *from* Jerusalem, where they had been told to abide. They could only speak with clouded faith of the bitter disappointment they had sustained in the betrayal and death of their Lord. Yet all the time He was faithfully with them, though their eyes were holden that they knew Him not. And finally He was revealed to them as He blessed and brake the bread. Which was the best of these two walks? It is hard to say—the first was glad, the second was sad. But Christ was equally in both to supply all the need, and the unhappy, tired, and faulty disciples were precious to Him, as well as the bright, innocent, and successful young fellows.

It would, of course, be most interesting to know what the qualities in St. John were which made it

possible for our Lord to fix on him a special and distinguished affection. Probably, like David and Jonathan, their souls were knit together at the first interview in the valley of the Jordan. There is every mark about St. John of intense attachment to Christ. He was, as a young man, ambitious and fiery, and so quick to resent a slight offered to his Master, that he wished to call down fire from Heaven to avenge the offence of the two Samaritan towns. And probably he was as eager as his mother to obtain for himself the best place in Heaven. He and his brother James were surnamed by Christ, Boanerges (the sons of Thunder), and certainly in the Book of Revelation there is a dwelling on fearful judgments, which might have driven some men almost out of their mind. But with all this there was, underneath, a tenderness and power of loving which has made him for us the apostle of Love, rather than the son of thunder. About him there seems to have been a certain reserve, a silence which glowed, while he received into his heart and mind the deepest truth which Christ offered. How different is his gospel to those written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His eyes ever beheld the unseen. Evidently the wonderful final discourses of Christ were burned into his very soul and memory, and made a deeper impression on him than even the miracles.

We have no authentic painting of St. John, but the pictures by Titian, in Venice and in Paris, seem to give the right idea of him—a noble, strong, dark face, full of vehement intention and of the fire of love.

It was a rough life which these thirteen men lived. Sometimes they were not only without a bed to lie on, but without money and without food. They were glad to munch the ears of corn as they walked through the fields, they were obliged to leave their Master hungry and thirsty while they went to forage for Him. Sometimes there was not a coin to pay their taxes. Yet we never hear a grumble. Let us remember, when hardships come to us, what these men joyfully endured. They were the chosen friends of our Lord, and this more than made up for all outward discomforts. Who would not envy them !

In speaking of the friendships of Christ, and of the nearness of souls to Him, we must certainly give the first place to His blessed mother. All are agreed that there is no woman in history whose character is so delicately beautiful as hers—depicted in the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel. The simplicity, the purity, the humility, and the holy reserve of her character are as noticeable as her courage, her ready obedience, and her capacity both for exalted joy and for profound grief. She is indeed "Blessed among women." We cannot doubt that she saw the truth about Christ more clearly than any of those around Him, and that she lived in a relationship of the closest confidence with Him. Her faith and bravery never failed. Almost His last thought on the Cross was of her—"Mother, behold thy son." "Son, behold Thy mother," he said. On her, with the other disciples, the Holy Ghost descended at Pentecost. That

Holy Spirit was no stranger to her, for it was by His power, thirty-three years before, that the Christ had become incarnate.

The Roman Church has declared the Virgin Mary to have been sinless, and has, as we know, made grievous mistakes in exalting and worshipping her. It seems almost as if the Holy Spirit, foreseeing this danger, had guarded against it in the narrative. Otherwise it would strike us as strange that after the exquisite record of the *Annunciation*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Nativity*, the mention of her henceforth should be so meagre and so negative. For we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that on the three occasions when she appears in the story, between His birth and His crucifixion, she does not appear in a position of special dignity. It seems as if this must be to make it clear that the place claimed for her as mediator, and as queen of heaven, is wrongly claimed. Certainly the position ascribed to her has gone far to rob our Lord of the grace and tenderness which are His. The idea that He has to be persuaded by His mother to be indulgent to the sinners whom He loved with an everlasting love, and whom He died to save, is a most odious and repulsive idea, and yet it has been insisted on for centuries in a most marked way by the Church of Rome.

The first time we hear of her after the *Nativity* is on the occasion when she sought for her boy at Jerusalem and found Him in the Temple. "How is it that ye sought Me?" "Wist ye not that I must be

about My Father's business?" Then He returned with them, and was subject to His parents at Nazareth.

The second incident concerning her is at the marriage feast at Cana, in Galilee. "They have no wine" said she, and He replied, "Woman, what have I to do with Thee, my hour is not yet come." But immediately afterwards He seems to have acted on her implied suggestion. No doubt their thoughts coincided closely on such occasions.

The third mention of her is in the gospel narrative when on one occasion she and His brethren were without the crowd, desiring to speak to Him, and when He says in response to her message, "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven."

We hear of her next waiting with devotion and undying love at the cross. Then comes the moment when He solemnly commits her to St. John.

Lastly we find her in the upper room with the other disciples, receiving the fiery gift at Pentecost. Of her death we know nothing.

Christ's friendships with women were very remarkable. They had the boldness of absolute purity. In the little company who journeyed with Him, there were several women who ministered to Him of their substance, besides Mary Magdalene (out of whom He had cast seven devils), Susanna, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward. At Calvary, we hear of women beholding from afar, who had followed Him from

Galilee, ministering unto Him—Mary, the mother of James and John, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. At the cross stood Mary the wife of Cleopas, with Mary Magdalene, St. John, and His mother.

Again, we are told of the family at Bethany, that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Friendship was evidently one of the great solaces of His life. It has often been remarked that Christ is so far different from the usual type of man, that there is no evidence of His ever having fallen in love, though He had these beautiful friendships with men and women.

Out of the crowd about Him, He was continually selecting those who were to live in closer relationship to Him. First, twelve were chosen; then seventy. Some were to be friends; some were to be apostles; some were to be disciples. All were to be loved and cared for. Oh that you and I may have and keep our place among His friends.

Christ was a great expert in the matter of friendship. It happens not seldom that philanthropists have come strangely short in family affection and in friendships. There are various reasons for this: among them are, a habit of hurry, over-occupation, ambition, and want of leisure. But Christ's friendships were not spoiled by any of those regrettable hindrances. He always had time to do what had to be done. And so have *we too*, if we only knew it! Do not let us suppose that a quick and eager civility



can ever be made shift with, instead of real, downright affection.

I myself have often failed in this way.

Among the friends of Christ we must reckon one whom He seldom saw, but greatly valued and admired—John the Baptist. They were almost exactly the same age, and their mothers had been great friends. But it is possible (though by no means certain), that the cousins had scarcely met till the Lord came to be baptised in Jordan. For Christ had been living in Galilee, and John had been from a child in the wilderness—he had been living the life of a hermit, till his voice sounded forth in irresistible eloquence, as he called his country to repentance and baptism. Here, indeed, was a worthy friend—full of courage, of humility, of loyalty, and of unselfish devotion. Surely no recorded words are more touching and beautiful than those of John the Baptist about Christ. His boldness, his popularity, his joyful acquiescence in being superseded, his desperate reproof to Herod, his painful question while in his prison, and finally his martyrdom—all show us one of the noblest of natures. Of him Christ said that no greater man had been born of woman than John the Baptist.

Nathaniel was another man to whom Christ's heart went forth with generous love and praise. So was the delightful Centurion, whom He commended for his faith, and whom we have talked of in a previous letter. So, probably, were Zacchæus and Nicodemus, and perhaps the seventy disciples.

Nor must we forget the special love He bore to children. Evidently they delighted in Him, and He in them, whether they were in His arms to be blessed, or set in the midst as an object lesson in His teaching, or carrying palms in His honour and crying "hosanna."

Christ is a model for us in the *unexacting* nature of His friendships. Did any other man's love ever survive so robustly the forsaking and insults of a chosen and beloved friend as His did after St. Peter's desertion and cursing? It seemed as if He loved him none the less either before his fall (when He foresaw it and yet promised him the keys of heaven) or afterwards (when He committed to him the care of His flock). In fact, He loved him and praised and honoured him all through, with all his faults and dangers. And still He is the same, loving you and me in spite of all our sins and weariness. Truly as Isaiah says, "His Name is 'Wonderful.'"

To us every word about Him is of priceless value. Of how few great men do we know the tastes and pleasures? Is it not good to read what He said of red skies, of the beauty of lilies, of the care for ravens and for sparrows, and of His eating broiled fish and honeycomb? In one sense we do not need to be told of His tastes, because He had the actual making of all things, and whatever is beautiful and good comes to us from Him. But all the same we like to have these little details of His earthly life specified. The more we can have our gaze fixed on Him the better.

The nightly conversion work at our new Headquarters is still going on gloriously. I think we have never had anything quite like it in the Church Army. It is (under God) due chiefly to Mr. Carlile himself; but also to the Home Captain and the zeal of the cadets who are shortly to be commissioned. I shall be very anxious to hear from each one of them after they have been a few days at their new work.

The points of this special success are short addresses on given subjects, while lantern slides are being shown for half-an-hour. Then instant personal dealing. Very little singing.

Please pray specially for ex-officers. One of the few great trials of my life is, that I sometimes have to get a post, not on our actual staff, for an officer whom I value and respect, and yet who does not show that aggressive conversion power which we are pledged to provide in C.A. officers. But, thank God! we have never parted from a consistent man without his being provided with a post, and I hope and expect we never shall.

To-day I have had two letters from first-rate officers, praising the officers who have preceeded them in their stations. One of them says: 'I must pay a tribute to my predecessor, Capt. —. He was a most marvellous fellow. He was not brilliant, he had very little education, was no student, no preacher, and an indifferent organiser; but he was a simple, saintly, Christlike man, who, by sheer force of character, *has endeared himself to all.* The influence of his example

will live in the place long after his name is forgotten. In many ways he was a difficult man to follow. He was physically strong, and did not know what fatigue was. He almost entirely lived in the homes of the people, where he was always a welcome visitor. He was ever rushing from house to house, up and down the parish, all day long, and my calmer ways of work were soon noticed, with the result that I am accused of not being so active as he was. I find splendid workers here, and the people are all loyal. I thank God and Captain — for this."

I want to conclude with a beautiful story which Capt. Brazier gave us this morning at our Conference. Two men were looking at a great piece of stone, and one of them said, "What do you see there?" "I see a stone," replied the other, "And I," replied the first man (who was a sculptor), "see an angel." May God give us the gift to see a possible image of Christ in every man or woman we meet. The sculptor knew what the stone might become when the chisel had done its work. And we may sometimes have insight to see in a rough, bad, godless man or woman, the possibility of a beautiful, priceless Christian worker.

And now, once more, God bless you, brothers and sisters.

Rise early. Keep the Rules. Be exactly loyal to God and man. Be definite in your prayers and thanksgivings. Take care of your health and voice. Win the victory by love and self-denial.

E.C.

DEAR COMRADES,—

I want to take for our early Spring subject

### THE RESURRECTION.

We will look at it in three aspects. First, the historical facts as recorded in the New Testament; secondly, its nature and characteristics; and thirdly its spiritual import.

The facts of the Resurrection as told us in the four Gospels and in the 1st Epistle to Corinthians have been called in question many times, and that is, no doubt, why the Holy Ghost inspired the disciples to describe it so carefully and so repeatedly. I have no more doubt that CHRIST rose from the dead, than I have that He was crucified, or that I am now sitting in this chair. The fact of His Resurrection penetrates our whole religion. Without it says St. Paul, "we are of all men, most miserable." Through it we have life and power, and the promise and pledge of our own rising again.

It is strange how men are persuaded to doubt the truth of the miracles, and yet to credit all sorts of false and silly outside miracles. They are willing to believe the oddest things about ghosts, and palmistry, and spiritualism (which may or may not be true), while at the same time they pride themselves on their incredulity about far less improbable facts recorded

for us in the Bible, supported by evidence, and believed in to the death by reliable witnesses.

Miracles seem to me far from incredible. Every year Nature turns water into wine, and multiplies bread corn a hundredfold. Every year seed is buried and from its husk rises new life. Every year thousands of diseases are healed by the known forces of nature. Is it difficult to believe that the same wonders which nature accomplishes in the ordinary way in a few months can be accomplished by CHRIST, the Creator, in a few moments? I do not find it at all difficult.

All the secret powers of growth, and health, and transformation are in Christ's hands, and surely He can use them when and how He sees fit. There is scarcely anything of which I should dare to say "It is impossible," unless it clashed with the foundation truth that GOD is Almighty Love.

But I am glad that miracles are exceptions and not rules, for how upsetting and disastrous they would be if they could be counted on! How many people would cease to be thrifty, and careful, and clean, if evil consequences did not generally follow dirt and extravagance and carelessness.

But there is a place for miracles in God's ordering of the world. They have happened, and they will, no doubt, happen again. The strange thing is that apparently there are sometimes *wrong* miracles (as prophesied repeatedly in the Bible). Let us remember that miracles do not always prove the truth of the assertions which they accompany. There are hidden

forces of nature which can sometimes be called into play by evil men and women, and which are calculated to "deceive even the elect." Miracles and wonders *alone* are most unsafe guides, even if we feel sure of them.

But as to the miracles of the New Testament let us bear in mind that with GOD *time* does not count. A thousand years are with Him as one day, and one day as a thousand years. By and bye, perhaps, our intelligence will be able to understand the mysteries of time and matter and space, but at present we cannot comprehend them, and we must be content to believe and to trust. My own fixed belief is that the best and most beautiful things are the nearest to the truth.

What God does is always the most perfect thing, and therefore when wonderful news is told me my only doubt as to its truth comes from my not always knowing whether something *better still* can be imagined.

Trouble and evil make many things painful and sad when they are only *half finished*. A pretty sketch may be produced by a second-rate artist in an hour, while the picture of a great painter is still in an incoherent and unsightly stage. It may take a year before it is advanced enough to be recognised by outsiders as a masterpiece. And much of life is like this.

Certainly if the truth of the story of the Resurrection depended only on its beauty, we should not hesitate for a moment to believe it, for it is exquisite all through. But the evidence of the witnesses (who

some of them laid down their lives for its veracity) and the fact that for nearly 1900 years the armies of God's people have lived in the power of it are also convincing proofs. Even in the old Testament we can see that God's Spirit taught the Resurrection. But in the three years of our Lord's ministry the prophecies became clearer and clearer. Then it was declared in the plainest words—"After three days the Son of Man shall rise again."

There is, however, a kind of comfort (when we are distressed at the world's unbelief) in remembering that even the disciples did not seem rightly to have received this declaration of Christ. For they were, as we know, crushed with fear at the Crucifixion, and were at first unbelieving and quite unprepared for the good news when the Resurrection had actually taken place.

As to its history, apparently, ten appearances of Christ are recorded after His Resurrection. I hope you will study them all, but I should like now to comment on His first appearance, which was to Mary Magdalene. For there were special points in it for us Church Army people.

It was indeed a *Sunday blessing* of "*finding the Lord*" which was vouchsafed to this happy and loving woman. So many good things are lost to us if we are not (like her) early risers. The month was April and "while it was still dark, very early in the morning" she was at the sepulchre seeking Him. She had not much knowledge (for she came expecting to find only



His dead body), but "she loved much," and love is better than knowledge. And therefore she finally triumphed. When she found the sepulchre empty she ran with alarm to Peter and John to tell them the dreadful news. She choose these two beloved disciples as the most likely persons to be of use under the circumstances, and she ignored Peter's fall, or never supposed that it would be lasting or unforgiven, and never considered that he had been a recreant while she had been faithful.

Her woman's instinct served her truly. It was the natural thing for her to seek their aid, and doubtless she was right to do so. But it availed her little. Peter and John came, and explored, and believed, and departed.

But love kept Mary Magdalene on the spot and brought her the mighty reward. She was in no hurry for breakfast. She stood weeping. And again she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre and this time she saw a sight which would have petrified most people with astonishment and been a wonder all their life long. But it seems to have caused Mary—absorbed with the thought of Christ—little emotion. What she saw was two angels in white sitting in the sepulchre. They spoke, and she spoke to them, but so carelessly that she scarcely waited for a reply before she turned away and saw One standing by her whom she at first took to be the gardener. Like the angels, He asked her (in love and pity) why she wept. Blinded with tears she did not recognise Him till she

heard the voice that she loved so well say the single word "Mary." "Rabboni" she replied in ecstasy, and her sorrow passed away for ever. For she knew now that her Lord had risen and was hers for all eternity. What a lovely story! The dawn, a garden, an eastern sky, two angels, a woman, and Christ risen!

I may say here that the five accounts of the Resurrection need careful study in order to harmonise the story, and especially as regards the first appearances. Apparently the little company of women were the first at the sepulchre, and they discovered that the grave was empty. Mary Magdalene then immediately left her companions and went to fetch Peter and John. She returned with them, and after their departure from the sepulchre she remained and saw Him. Then He appeared to the other women on the road to the disciples. Next to St. Peter, then to the two who were going to Emmaus, then to the ten apostles. All these appearances were on Easter Day. A week later the eleven apostles all saw Him. Then He appeared to them in Galilee, then to five hundred people at once, then to St. James. And finally on the Mount of Olives.

And now, leaving the details of the narrative to you for your own private study and discoveries, I will pass on to the question: "What is the doctrine of the Bible as to the *nature* of the resurrection of the body—of *Christ's* body and of *our* body?" I confess that the truth is far beyond me, and only to be dimly discerned, but what I do see I wish to give to you.

Certainly CHRIST'S Resurrection is a pattern of ours, and therefore there is a two-fold reason for our wishing to understand it. And in some mysterious way it is *more than a pattern*, for He says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." His identification and union with His people mean heights and depths that we cannot yet measure or conceive.

We know that after the Crucifixion His body was buried in the tomb while His Spirit (and I suppose His Soul) visited Hades (or "Hell" as the Creed says). Then He returned to the sepulchre and rose in His resurrection body.

His former body had, apparently, been transmuted between His Crucifixion and His Resurrection into the Heavenly Body, which certainly had new powers, and was changed, even though it was the same. He ate and drank, and had the marks of His passion, but the merely earthly elements had been distributed and somehow got rid of. And so no doubt will it be with His people who are buried in the earth, drowned in the sea, or dissolved by fire into the air. Corruption or fire cannot touch this resurrection body, for it is indestructible. Strange to say it appears that it is not united to the soul at our death, but separated from it and remains sleeping, as it were, till the soul rejoins it at the time of the final resurrection. Yet St. Paul expressly tells us that the soul is *not* unclothed at death, but clothed upon with "a house from Heaven." How much that clothing means it is hard to say—but evidently the house which is from Heaven is not the same as the resurrection body.

I can only tell you as much as the Bible tells us. It is a subject to ponder over, but certainly not to dogmatise on beyond what the Spirit of God has clearly revealed.

I think I should not believe in the resurrection of the body if it were not so clearly and repeatedly taught in the Bible. I should have thought that this "clothing" of the Soul and Spirit after death was sufficient, and all that we were to look for, and that what we commit to the grave, or what is drowned in the sea, or consumed by fire, was for ever done with, and passed into the elements. But apparently it is not so. It looks as if some wonderful indestructible seed remained which at our resurrection is to be re-joined by our Spirit, and our Soul (clothed with the "house" which is from Heaven). It is very wonderful that we should be told to look for this great consummation. But the prophecy of Daniel, the declarations in the Epistles, and the words in Revelation cannot be set aside and I do not see how they can be otherwise interpreted.

Some people have no hesitation in ignoring such parts of the Bible as do not suit them. But my belief is that it is all given to us by God, and that its Divine origin will be abundantly justified. How many times has it been already proved right when man's criticism was supposed to have undermined it? For my part I find it stands fire absolutely, though, of course, I know that many people have made mistakes about it. I, myself, used to think that we ought to

receive as obligatory all that David and Solomon and Job wrote. Now I understand that some of their sayings are records of what they said in erring moods, and therefore not to be accepted by us as *right*. And I used to think that many parts must be accepted as materially true which I now see are to be taken mystically—true in the deepest sense, but not recorded as material facts. As instances I would remind you of the parable of the ten Virgins in the New Testament, and of certain points in the account of the creation in the Old Testament. And besides this we must remember that in many instances the Light of God's Holy Spirit has shone through a human medium which has not been able to show it otherwise than obscurely and with human discolouration. No doubt this is specially true of certain passages in the prophets. Moreover, humanity was to a large extent uneducated and undeveloped in those old days. Our light is now very different to what it was in Old Testament times. And later on even St. Paul tells us that sometimes he spoke on his own authority and not "by the Spirit." Probably his contemptuous remarks about women in I. Timothy ii. would reckon this way. But we shall assuredly prove the truth of Christ's words, that "the Scripture cannot be broken." Those who live by it faithfully shall some day see it transfigured with heavenly beauty.

But the recorded truths of the coming Resurrection are too vital to be treated hesitatingly, and they call for our careful consideration and study.

The chief passages which deal with the question are the following:—

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Daniel xii. 2). So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption—it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . “The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed—in a moment. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” (I. Cor. xv.).

“We that are alive that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep, for the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout—and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” (I. Thess. iv. 13, 14).

“I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened . . . and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them.” (Rev. xx. 12, 13).

These are some of the principal passages, and no doubt they present great, though by no means insuperable, difficulties.

If you ask me what germ of our earthly body remains to be united at the resurrection with our Soul and Spirit I can only answer that *I do not know*. God knows. St. Paul throws what light he can on the subject by the analogy of the bare grain sown in the earth and springing up into new life, while the

husk, as refuse, becomes united with the earth. The germ of seed life is of course microscopically small at first. I do not know what the process is, but I find no difficulty in believing in it.

But you must receive what I have said as liable to be incomplete, or even mistaken, for it is a deep subject, and as its details do not affect our daily living, it is possible that God for some good reason reserves the full truth. I can imagine other possibilities respecting the matter. At all events He will accomplish the very best thing conceivable.

What greatly matters to us *now* is that we should apprehend the *spiritual* import of the Resurrection, and should practice it in our lives.

We "are risen with Christ." How wonderful! Our Easter should last all the year round; and year after year, and for ever. This is the secret of the power of holy and humble living. I wish I could tell you more than I can about it *experimentally*. But I feel how far short I come, and I would rather study with you such chapters as Romans vi, and viii; Ephesians ii; Phillipians iii; and Colossians iii; than talk about blessings received or desired. Always remember that Satan spreads special snares for those who are determined to live the holiest life, and that the world, the flesh, and devil are in ambush close by.

But those who live the resurrection life are delivered from sin and evil in proportion to the degree in which they live it. And what blessing for themselves and others this means!

Let us set ourselves to understand as we can, what the Bible tells us on this point—the living in the power of the Resurrection.

Let me quote for you the following passages :

That, like as Christ was raised from the dead . . . so we also must walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His Resurrection. If we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. . . . So reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. . . . Present yourselves unto God as alive from the dead . . . for sin shall not have dominion over you. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. (Romans vi.).

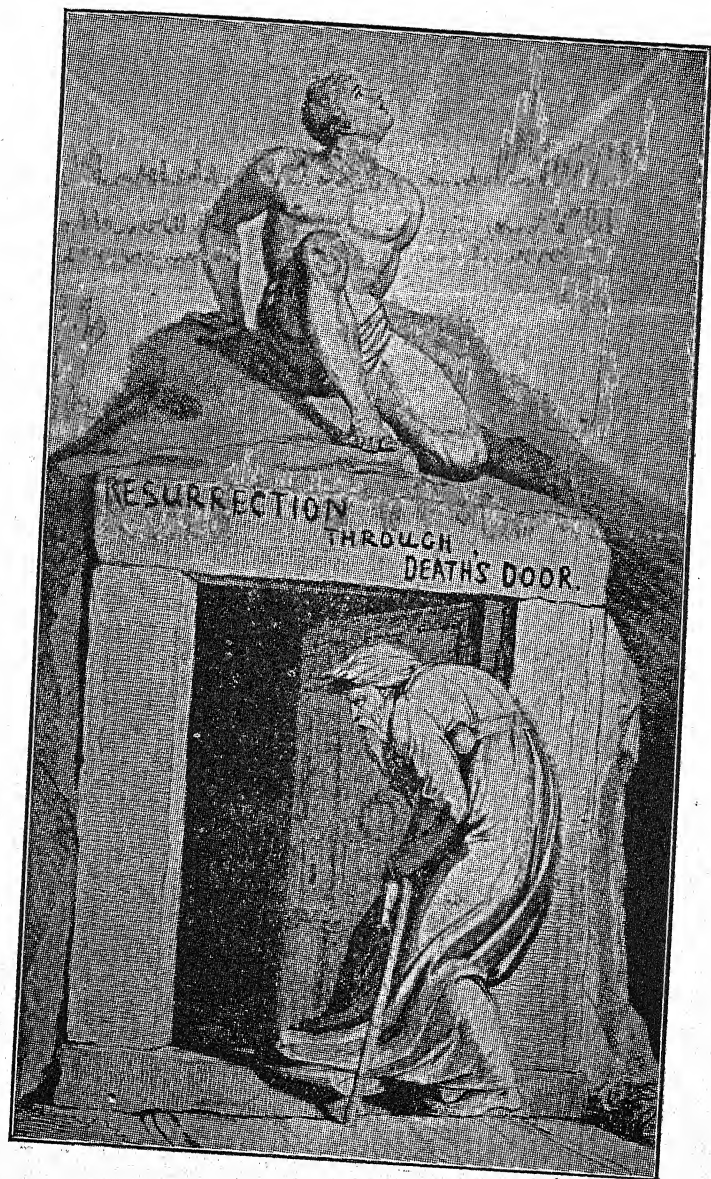
If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through the Spirit that dwelleth in you. . . . We groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Romans viii.).

What is this quickening of our mortal body?

We, which are alive and remain shall be "changed in a moment," as Christ's body was changed at His Resurrection. Is the quickening taking place *here* as the New Man is generated, or born, or growing in us?

These are mysteries which, thank God, can be lived without being defined. We are called (as Simeon said) to be delivered from the hands of our enemies, and to serve Him without fear in holiness and righte-





ousness all the days of our life. The blessing is received through faith by humble souls who watch and pray. And it is by their lives, and not by their words, that the observant world knows that they possess a gift of God which others lack. May that free, joyful life be yours and mine. May the blood of Christ be hourly cleansing us, and the Holy Ghost inspiring us.

And now, with all my heart, I wish you a happy Easter—within and without.

I hope you will not think this lesson too difficult and abstruse. I myself feel the great value of pondering over matters which are “too high” for me to comprehend fully—*as yet*.

One of our Mission Nurses writes me the following happy bit of experience :

“A woman here is longing to give herself to the Saviour, and whilst we were talking she said: ‘Nurse, I feel I must tell you something. You remember when you first came here, that the Vicar’s wife brought you to the Mother’s meeting. When she introduced you she said you would visit us in our homes. And I, along with some other mothers said to each other, ‘We don’t want any-one poking and prying into our houses’ And to think of us thinking like that about you. And now God has sent you to lead me to Himself! Will you forgive me?’ I was so thankful to God for these words.”

Mr. Carlile has sent me the following capital bit

for this bi-monthly. How good it is to find that such a man as Wesley was living by our C.A. early rising rule. And beating us hollow at it!

"In his famous "Journal," John Wesley, thus gives the secret of his long and active life:

"Saturday, June 28, 1788.—I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year; and what cause have I to praise God, for a thousand spiritual blessings and for bodily blessings also! I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever.

"I impute this result partly, 1. To my constant exercise and change of air. 2. To my never having lost a single night's sleep, sick or well, on land or at sea, since I was born. 3. To my having sleep at command, so that whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night. 4. To my having constantly, for about sixty years, risen at four in the morning. 5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning for above fifty years. 6. To my having had so little pain in my life, and so little sorrow, or anxious care."

This was his joyful way of looking at things, for many people have said that his trials were great and exceptional. . . .

A C.A. Officer should always be aggressive and fresh, and thinking of new plans for converting men and women. It often happens that the Vicar engages the Officer with an idea of himself learning something of our special ways, and it is best therefore for the Cap-

tain, in most instances, to go ahead on his own responsibility. It is generally unfair, and a mistake, to consult the Clergy about every little detail, for if they should be unsuccessful the Vicar would then get blamed for them, and this would not be right, as they are due to us and to the Officer, and any blame of failure ought to be ours. In the same way Bishops hate to be consulted about doubtful experiments of their clergy. Thank God it is very seldom that a real C.A. method turns out badly.

Work therefore on the lines we have taught you when it is possible, and if the Vicar objects, obey him cheerfully, but write to Headquarters for advice if you are really hampered by not getting the right scope. Kind actions and a beautiful character are the things which win the day more than any special method.

I want to thank some of you very specially for your great generosity in almsgiving. It makes me almost feel ashamed of myself when I find how much some of you spare out of your small salaries to help those who are worse off than yourself.

I am much struck by the truth of these two passages in the Bible: "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again." And, "He that deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand."

It is quite curious how badly off rich people who are not liberal *sometimes* are. Though their incomes may amount to thousands of pounds a year, yet they have still the feeling that they want more than they

have. And all the time they feel mean. I think most people, rich or poor, are generous, but we all know kind-hearted people who are full of liberal impulses which carry them to the very verge of giving money, and yet they stop short just at the very point of giving it. Either they say they have "so many calls," or they do not feel sure how to give wisely, or it is somebody else's business to give to that particular thing. They feel generously, and talk of their sympathy and sorrow for the needy, and of the duty of helping. In fact they do everything except give.

What surprises there will be in the next world when such people find themselves miserably poor, and begin to realise how rich they might have been if they had laid up treasure in heaven by almsgiving !

I must say that I think it is comparatively rare to find people (whether rich or poor) stingy. Most people are generous I think, and *like* to give, especially when they realise the need, and many actually *do* give.

I think the poor will be as surprised as the rich, by and bye, to find that a self-denying gift of 3½d., has sometimes counted for more riches in heaven than a thousand pounds from a millionaire.

"What I spent I had,  
What I saved I lost,  
What I gave I have."

But, as I said before, it is proved in this life that poverty is experienced by the rich if they are stingy, and that riches are experienced by the poor if they are liberal.

I have been very much pleased and touched with one of our Officers (recently gone to a Station) who refuses to take the salary which I had arranged for him to have, as he says he can do comfortably on less, and even save money out of it, and that there is difficulty in getting the money together in his parish. This is a very fine and noble way of giving, and shows the true Christlike Spirit.

I want to tell you how beautifully and self-denyingly many of our Social Officers behaved during the winter times of special distress. One Captain—though his wife was ill and suffering—brought *to his own home* night after night, a large number of men blue with cold and hunger, for food and shelter. And he lodged, in some empty tumble down houses near, hundreds of suffering outcasts.

God bless you every one.

E.C.

*May, 1903.*

DEAR COMRADES,—

I want to talk to you to-day about  
KNOWING GOD.

Let us pray to Him for this great blessing.

“O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead us and bring us unto Thy Holy hill and to Thy dwelling.”

May the gifts of knowledge of God, and of abiding with Him in His holy hill, be yours and mine. How do they come to us?

The best way, I suppose, is for them to come naturally, and from the very first, as they do with children and their parents.

There is a Divine Spirit in everyone, which is of GOD, so that (as St. Paul says) all, even the heathen, are “the offspring of GOD.” And this Divine part of us (when it wakes up) naturally loves GOD, because it is akin to Him. And therefore, when Christian parents tell their children that above them, and around them, and within them, there is a GOD of Love, who made all good and beautiful things, the children easily believe it.

I remember that when my brother and sisters and I were children, our mother always taught us to know GOD by what we loved. For instance, when we

admired our favourite flowers, we understood that their beauty was from GOD, and that He rejoiced in it as we did. Blue is almost always the favourite colour with children, and it is probably the colour chiefly associated with heavenly things. I often think with profit, of the blue of the nemophyla, the forget-me-not, and the salvia. It was the same when we first saw a hedge-sparrow's nest with its turquoise eggs, and learnt the child's hymn: "Who taught the bird to build its nest." And the same when we gazed at the stars.

And, in like manner, we learnt that He desired us to be good, and was grieved when we were naughty, and that He loved to take away pain, and to comfort those who were in trouble. We were never asked to believe the sad and wicked nonsense that GOD did not love us when we were naughty. We knew that our parents were kind and wise, and patient, and we knew that God too was kind, and wise, and patient. Soon we were taught by pictures something about JESUS CHRIST, and that He was the Son of GOD Who lived to bless people, and who died to save them. And a habit of prayer began almost with our earliest intelligence. Parents have themselves to blame if they let their children begin to grow up without love and care for GOD. The injury they do them by neglecting thus to teach them, is immeasurable, for the earliest part of life is the very best time for learning foundation truths. Sooner or later all enter the Kingdom of GOD "as little children," if they enter it at all.



The sun, the moon, the stars ; the morning and evening skies, the hills, and the fields were all lessons to us of what GOD is. So that the knowing and loving Him, and the conviction that He cared for all the things we were learning to admire, become more and more a habit.

Children often ask questions which are difficult to answer, but their questions should not be avoided.

"Why did GOD make the Devil?" is a common question, for children are generally much interested in the Devil, and not so much alarmed at him as might be expected.

"My darling, you are too young to understand everything," said our mother, "and I do not understand it all myself. But I know that it was for some good reason that GOD allowed him to exist and I know we get stronger and better if we refuse to do as he tempts us to do. The Bible tells us that Satan was not always evil, but he fell into sin. GOD has made you with a power to be naughty in order that you may choose to be good. An animal—your dog, for instance—cannot sin as you can sin, but it is much better to be a child than a dog, because a child is made in GOD'S image, and can learn to do right, and refuse to do wrong."

"Why did GOD make so many heathen, mother, and so many bad people. Does He love them?"

"Yes, and He always desires to win them to be good and happy. But it often takes a long time. We must pray for them and we must send out more people

to teach them. Perhaps we may go to them ourselves by and bye. I want you to take great care of your Missionary box, and to put pennies into it when you can."

"Why does He let old Mrs. Allen be so ill and have so much pain, mother?"

"I think that she will be glad some day that she suffered all this pain and illness, indeed, she says whenever I see her: 'God's will be done.' People get good things through pain, though they do not always know it. But they will find it out sooner or later. GOD means us to help and comfort people who suffer, as much as ever we can. Pain is like fire, and fire makes many things valuable that would be bad and worthless without it. We showed you the other day, at the manufactory what beautiful things fire makes of glass. Fire is the way for gold and silver to be made pure. Some day, perhaps, people who have suffered will help us more than we have ever helped them. If the world had no pain it could never be so glorious a place as it is going to be when it becomes CHRIST'S Kingdom. Pain has its use. You cried the other day when the doctor vaccinated our baby and hurt its arm, but the doctor knew that it was kind to give it the pain, and some day baby will be glad that he has been vaccinated."

These children's problems are much the same that people get upset with when they are grown up, and it has become a fashion, and a very bad fashion, to make them an excuse for infidelity. Sometimes very good

and true souls are troubled with them to the end of their lives, and it is difficult to say that such doubts and fears are entirely wrong. Tennyson has written, "He who has never doubted yet has never yet believed." This is not, perhaps, universally true, but undoubtedly a truth that has been reached through doubts and conflicts, is a truth of extra strength and value.

At any rate, it is good to realise (as we get older) the truth of Christ's declaration, that many come from the north and the south, and the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom. Some of the ancient faiths in God seem to have been almost as pure as the Jewish faith, and St. Paul tells us in the second chapter of Romans, that "glory, honour, and peace," are for everyone (Jew or Gentile) who "works good." God be praised for the "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). It is grievous to find how true religion is liable to become corrupted. The knowledge of one God of infinite goodness, declined into heathenism and idolatry among most of the old nations, and Christianity itself has become corrupted so terribly in certain lands and sects that it is little better than heathenism. In Spain and Italy the worship of the Virgin and the saints, and the horrible cruelty of the Inquisition, exceed the horrors of un-Christian religions, and some of the Calvinistic doctrines about God (held by certain of the "strict Baptists" and some sects of the "Plymouth Brethren") are almost

incredibly bad. We may thank God, however, that He can rear beautiful, holy, and true souls even out of the worst and most cruelly narrow and God-dishonouring sects.

It is strange that men should be so blind and so ungrateful as to disdain the earthly and visible good things by which God makes Himself known. Our five senses—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, are His gifts, and instead of rejecting and condemning them (as some ascetics have done) we ought (of course, with moderation and due self-denial) to rejoice in them and enjoy them, and to be blessed by them. "Whatsoever things are lovely" let us "think on these things."

But always let us be *temperate*, choosing the best as the most Divine, and despising nothing which bears His thought upon it or within it.

*Behold Him in all that is good*, for there is no good thing that is not of Him. We learn this in the Psalms, and in many other parts of the Bible.

The healthy recognition of God in common experience is a great safeguard against the danger which sometimes accompanies those extraordinary and mystical experiences which are vouchsafed to certain souls—good in themselves, but liable to perversion.

I suppose that there is no delight so great as the sunshine of God's Presence consciously felt. And it is doubtless given (often after much anguish) for a great purpose—as in the cases of St. John and of St. Paul, and also of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel,

and others. It is worth while to read and compare all their experiences (which were wonderfully alike) of being overwhelmed by the Presence of God. In all these cases it was the "pure in heart" who saw God. Sin half blinds most men and women, and makes it impossible for them to enjoy the highest things.

But I want to tell you that these almost intoxicating experiences must not be *unduly* desired, for they have their great dangers, and we know both in history and in present experiences that they have been enjoyed and almost boasted of by many who have misused them and fallen into disgraceful sin.

How awful is the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, telling how a cherub, perfect in beauty and knowledge, and riches, fell from heaven through pride, and was turned to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who had known him.

I suppose that, for most of us, mystical experiences belong to a later stage, and are not to be too determinedly insisted on in this present life, but welcomed if they come as gleams of what is to be hereafter. I hold fast the belief that God has made all good, and that the *normal* is best for most of us (who are still as buds or caterpillars, and not yet flowers and butterflies !)

Among our own workers—those who have talked most of their being "led" by special revelations, have been among the least satisfactory and reliable. There are instances of people saying they have been "led" to go

into debt, or to break agreements, or to take some step which was clearly contrary to the great eternal laws of right and wrong. No one is ever "led" by God's Spirit to do a dishonourable or ungracious action. Many of the ecstatic and mystic utterances of so-called saints have been highly unsatisfactory, and akin to the devil and the flesh. We are expressly told that Satan can clothe himself like an angel of light, and there are abundant proofs of his having done so. But nevertheless a holy gladness in God and the sense of being lost in Him are among the blesseddest gifts ever vouchsafed to us. They cause the face to shine, and they give a triumphant faith over difficulties. Cherish, as precious gifts, for future use, all experiences of joyful communion with God. But do not be upset if they are fleeting. Let them strengthen and steady you for the work God has given you to do.

"Tasks in hours of insight willed,  
Can be in times of gloom fulfilled."

But remember that the simple, straightforward ways of getting to know God, by doing His commandments, by studying His Word, by communing with Him in prayer and praise, and by feeding on Him in the Sacrament (and at other times, too, for St. Augustine tells us that the soul feeds on Him as truly in the Epistle and the Gospel as in the Eucharist) are the ways within reach of all of us, and probably the *best* ways. If we are faithful in these, more will be added when the time comes.

A C.A. Captain or Mission-Nurse has the opportu-

ity of becoming a great saint without knowing it, and I believe God is at this moment rejoicing at the likeness to Christ which can be discerned in some of our Officers and C.A. soldiers by everyone whose eyes are opened.

“The common round, the daily task,  
Will furnish all we ought to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves a road,  
To bring us daily nearer God.”

The greatest saints do not guess that they are saints. They are not thinking of themselves, but of God and His needy ones. I had, years ago, the privilege of knowing two great heroes—Father Damien and General Gordon—and it always struck me that neither of them had any idea that he was anything out of the common, or cared to think or talk about himself.

Do not, however, be *over* troubled if you cannot help thinking and worrying about yourself, or being pleased with any success you may have attained. Selfishness is generally the hard-won virtue of middle-aged or old people, and even with them it is not very common.

God leads us on in His own wise and kind way, and some day we shall be perfected.

“Lord, lift Thou up the Light of Thy Countenance upon us.”

Careful daily confession to Him of our need and our sins, or sinfulness, is absolutely essential. And we must not only speak to the Lord, but *listen* to Him. His Voice can be truly heard if we are still and listen.

This is why that early hour's communion with Him every morning is so essential to our soul's health.

Without it what chasms we may fall into! What awful pits *have* sometimes enclosed men and women who *have once been holy* and have fallen.

I want you to carefully and prayerfully study the 136th Psalm. It is one of the most interesting in the whole book, and it is very peculiar.

It is evidently David's painful confession of what he calls his "abominable sin," written after that interview with Nathan, in which his misdoings were brought out of darkness into the searching light of God.

He was, as you know, guilty of breaking the sixth and seventh commandments. For a whole year he had been in an awful state of backsliding. Then mercifully came conviction, and also punishment of a kind which a passionately affectionate man like David would feel most acutely—the death of his child.

God be thanked for our punishments, for they are loving, wise, and kind. How terrible it would be if He let us alone after our falls!

Last year I had a heart-breaking case of a man who fell into sin and concealed it till it was found out, and brought disgrace and misery upon himself and others.

The year before the same thing happened with a woman I knew.

Dear brothers and sisters let us confess *at once* that we may be forgiven and cleansed and re-inspired. How can our work be a blessing—or anything but a curse—till this is done



How truly the opening words of the Psalm came from David: "*My heart* showeth me the wickedness of the ungodly." "The wolf knows what the evil beast thinks." David had indeed been a wolf and an "evil beast," blinded and compelled by animal passion. He had Bathsheba's fall, and Uriah's blood on his head.

Too well could he understand the sins of sinners!

How often we find that accusers and evil speakers are guilty of the very sins which they condemn and gloat over in other people. How often women are hard on other women because they themselves have been guilty. I scarcely know of one exception.

Yes, his own heart showed him the wickedness of others. He remembered how he had "flattered himself" till his "abominable sin" was *found out*. He had "left off to behave himself wisely, and had *imagined mischief on his bed*." He had not "abhorred that which was evil."

Probably during this time of backsliding he had still professed to be all right and had been regarded as a specially good man. Alas! alas!

But God had restored him, maimed and weakened though he was.

"Thy mercy, O Lord, reacheth unto the heavens. *Thy judgments are like the great deep*. Thou Lord shalt save both man and beast."

David knew that he was both a man and a beast. It is the old story of the seventh of Romans.

But, in spite of all this, God was the Well of Life, and in His Light would he still see Light.

Never again was his life what it had been before his fall. Wars and tumults and treachery beset him. Again and again his heart was stabbed deeply by the ingratitude and vileness of his children. But God saved him, and loved him to the end. And what a debt we—all of us—owe to David. And how we love him in spite of his sins!

How deep and acute and real his repentance was!

With what force his heart beat and panted after God! How strong was his desire, unquenched even by his faults!

Comrades, *cherish your desire for God*. Desire is the next best thing to possession.

If the sense of God's Presence fades from you as a gleam of sunshine fades and leaves the room unilluminated and grey, what is to be done?

When this happens to me it is *generally* by my own fault. I have said, or thought, or done, or left undone something amiss, and this token of sunlessness is God's kind and true way of bringing me back to my senses. Let me bear the loss humbly, patiently, and even thankfully; the gleam will come back again if it is longed for; let me woo it carefully, and may I not distract myself from the desire after it.

Sin always dims the Light of God, and yet we sin often so lightly. A little bitterness or resentment, a wrong thought allowed and encouraged, a few careless words—how much damage they may do to the joy and health of the soul.

The sunshine of God's Presence is I believe, the

happiest gift that ever comes to us. The happiest ! But it may be that faithful service to Him done in darkness and sorrow is better.

How loving and forgiving is God ! Blessing us and giving us His Grace and His tokens when we have so little deserved them !

I remember Anna Letitia Waring (who wrote the hymn " Father I know that all my life is portioned out for me,") saying once to me : " As to the joy of communion with God, remember that our emotions are not always under our control, *but there is a kind of spiritual faithfulness which is.*"

I have just been reading again a letter received nearly a year ago from Nurse B. It troubles her that sometimes she feels so unable when visiting a sick person to say the word of power. " The spirit seems quenched and the result nothing."

I think we all experience this sometimes, and perhaps it is not all our own fault. Patience, faith and prayer are—in some cases, our only resources. Even Christ could not work in certain places, because of the people's hard, unbelieving state, and much that He did must have seemed like a bitter disappointment for the time.

But when we look back later on at these trying cases, we shall generally find light about them. Perhaps we shall see that though the soil was hard and frosty, yet a little green blade appeared to show that the seed was not wasted. Sometimes the victory came in a side issue. Sometimes there was a needed

lesson for ourselves in the trial. Certain it is, that God will not blame us for not doing what we *could* not do. And as He is Almighty Love we may trust to Him the soul that Christ loved enough to die for it. Only, "let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Love, faith and hope must win the day sooner or later by God's grace, even if in some instances we do not see it till we have passed through the gates of death. . . . .

### WRITING PRAYERS.

I wonder how many of you ever follow the plan (which I talked about when you were in Training) of writing your prayers to God when you feel specially distracted with outside thoughts. I myself find it of the greatest service. And it helps me much when I read over again the prayers which formerly I wrote.

Here are a few sentences written long ago: "O my Father, I grieve that my prayers lately have been languid, and my life half a failure, though it is so busy. Give me more force for Thee. Forgive, cleanse, deliver. Inspire me for to-day. Would that I were more like others whom I know. How brilliant is —. How capable is —. How holy is —. How faultless is —. How spiritually effective is —. I thank Thee for letting me know them all. May I profit by their example. Guide me to-day with — and with —. I thank Thee for Thy servants departed this life and now within the veil. My father and mother, E.R.G., G.M.T., W.M.T., C.F.B.M. ———.

Give me more light as I can bear it, and more working power. I give Thee deep and hearty thanks for all Thy forgiveness and salvation." The thing is to make our prayers definite.

At a Conference of Officers the other day, I jotted down some of the points:

CAPTAIN CODLING: "When I got to my station, I told the young men I wanted them to help me with moving the forms. They were glad to do it and became friends and workers. And when a tea was proposed *they gave it*.

CAPTAIN COTTLE: "The only way is to be in contact with Christ—in the morning hour to touch Christ before we touch souls. Every Monday, my Vicar, Bishop Thornton, asks me about conversion cases, and kneels down with me, and prays for them."

CAPTAIN NAYLOR: "If we want to get the men in we must go to them and invite them personally. We want to give them a message from God. We want Him to tell us things alone in the darkness which we may proclaim to them in the light."

CAPTAIN MERRICK: "They must believe in us before they believe in God. We must be *like* Christ."

CAPTAIN WADDLE: "I have separate meetings for all sorts—for men, for women, for children, for girls. On Wednesday afternoon I have one hour's Gospel Service for women from the wash-tubs. I have a small committee. I keep a roll, and visit absentees. I have athletics for boys, cricket and football, and

also draughts and dominoes. But I always have half-an-hour's Bible lesson with them first."

NURSE MINTO: "Don't be always dissatisfied and grumbling. Only God can do the work. Trust Him and work."

CAPTAIN COOPER: "Speak to people as if they were friends. A great deal is done by shaking hands properly. Let it be a good grip. Sometimes it's like getting hold of a codfish's tail."

CAPTAIN CROOK: "We have had blessing with a lot of young fellows. We got permission from the manager to visit them in the coal pit, and then Capt. Birchby and I began by using the pick ourselves."

CAPTAIN WHITEHEAD: "In my country parish I announced a flower service, the children brought the flowers, the parents came to look at them, and there were six conversions. It made a great move."

NURSE SAYERS: "Punctuality is a great point. It has a bad effect to be late. I am always there half-an-hour before the meeting begins."

#### VAN CAPTAINS.

I hope our Van Officers realise how much we value all their willing service in finding openings and candidates. They are the greatest help. And again and again, I receive independent testimonies to the good and rousing work they do all over the country—winning golden opinions from the clergy and the people.

I have had a very cheerful letter from Van Captain

G., who finds time to read books (by Stevenson, Carlyle, and others), as well as to carefully study his Bible. He praises the Cadet who is with him, and I daresay a life-long friendship is growing up between the two after the manner of the old Knights and their Squires.

A Cadet never forgets how his Captain was willing to take the lowest place, to rise earliest, and do the roughest work instead of puffing himself out with pride and self-indulgence and false gentility (as one Van Captain once did long ago) !

These eight rules for

#### VISITING

are Captain Davey's, and they are so good that I give them to you in his words—unaltered.

“(1). Visiting should be done whether we feel in the humour for it or not.

(2). Knock at the door. Hat off when invited in. Not sit down until asked. Not visit during meal hours if possible.

(3). Not lecture anyone before others. They all join in if you do.

(4). Get prayer if possible. Offer to pray for the little babe, or the absent lad. No parent will object to this, and a great point is gained if we get them on their knees.

(5). Note empty houses. When let, be on the look out for newcomers. When they come in, visit, and invite to services, and get the children to school.

(6). Visit the public-houses. Ask the landlord's permission. Chum up with the men at the bar.

Leave invitations for the Sunday afternoon Services. Get workers to meet them when they come out on the Sunday afternoon, and bring them along to the Bible Class, etc.

(7). Have an hour once each week when men may find you at home.

(8). At every house lift up the heart in prayer and thanksgiving before entering."

Remember what I have said to you before—that it is your *character* which matters. The Spirit in which we do our work and say our say, matters even more than the thing done or said. It is not circumstances that decide how good and useful our life is, but the measure of the Divine Christ life which works out through us. When we are young, we are apt to think that a great change in outward circumstances would put everything right. What a mistake! What we need is that *our present life* should be inspired, and *our common duties* transfigured. Then we are ready for any sudden elevation (which God may order for us any day) to what is heroic. Let this comfort those of us who cannot get all the "scope" they want to get. But write to me if you have difficulty on this point. If we have the spirit of discipline, of self-denial, of love, and of faith, then there will be the best kind of power.

Wait for God's path to be clear and close at your feet. How many disappointments have come (for instance) from the ambition to take orders when there was no command from God. And now, dear



comrades, farewell. Watch and pray. Keep the rules. Be filled with love, hope, and faith. I commit you all—Captains, Nurses, and Friends—one by one, name by name, to the God Who is our salvation.

E.C



July, 1903.

DEAR COMRADES,

This letter does not reach you till July, but I am beginning it at Easter, in Italy, with the list of your names now before me.

I am specially praying for those who are now spending their first Sunday in their stations.

On this happy Easter morning I feel more than ever what a joy and power the Church Army is, and how we all help each other, and are joints and bands of Christ's Body. He is risen, and is surely standing in our midst and living in us. As I write I am looking out on the calm bay of Naples, with the exquisite island of Capri opposite me, and Vesuvius on my left. It is sunset, and I have paused in my writing to bring your names, one by one, before God. He knows your exact need, and can supply it all.

I am greatly enjoying my holiday, but every day I feel increasingly what a privilege it is to be given by GOD a definite *work to do*—something that fills to the full the days and years of our life. What dangers and evils work delivers us from !

How many good people there are who are half failures because they have no happy burden of service to steadily bear, but only intermittent and casual bits of work.

It is a real blessing that most people *must* work

(and work pretty hard) if they are to be fed, and clothed, and housed. Any work is better than no work, but that our work should be (whether paid or unpaid) to help and bless others is indeed a crowning gift from our Father in Heaven. And this is our case.

How different our successes, our failures, and our dangers are as life passes on. When I was twenty I was beset with all sorts of fears and temptations that now trouble me little. But they have given place to others which are, perhaps, equally serious. I think one of the worst dangers of experienced workers is *routine*. We get so used to things that they fail to *stir* us as they once did. The surprises of beginners are a great help and stimulus. That a soul should be converted is astonishing and delightful to one who has just started work. That a temptation should be overcome gives a thrill of gratitude. That people should love and trust us is wonderful and inspiring. And all these experiences bring the young worker into closer communion with GOD. He thanks, he fears, he confesses, he rejoices, he loves.

But ten years later he has to depend on something else than surprises. They necessarily decrease, and instead of them there needs to be substituted a steady, faithful intimacy with our Lord. Men and women whose marriages have been fully blessed, tell us that they would not change the happiness and comfort of their silver or golden wedding day, for all the perilous joys of their honeymoon—good and fitting though

they were in their season. Summer, autumn and winter are as good in their way as beautiful, light-hearted spring, with its showers and sunshine.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now I am back in London, and I take up my pen again.

It is Sunday, our happiest day in the week, and one of my happiest hours has been spent in reading a number of your answers to my May letter. My heart beats with joy as I read.

I want us to consider to-day some points in the  
LIFE OF MOSES.

He lived, as you know, 3,500 years ago, but yet his figure to-day stands out clear and bright. Certainly he was one of the grandest and most heroic men in the world's history. He is called, again and again, "Moses, the man of God." He was honoured by Christ, and he was exalted by his nation to a position which was even too high.

Yet when we read the earlier part of his history we find him an almost timid man, who shrank in his self-distrust four times from the mission to which God called him.

Of all the things that he has left us, by saying or doing, I value none more than the 90th Psalm, which is called, "The prayer of Moses, the Man of God." I have written to you before about this Psalm, and its beauty, its melancholy, its faith, its hope. I know nothing written since the world began that is more moving. It is chosen for the burial service in our

Church, and therefore we associate it with many of our most sacred and touching memories.

It is noticeable that though Moses lived to be 120 years old, and probably wrote this Psalm towards the end of his life, yet he says in it that the days of men are three score years and ten, and that if they live to be eighty their strength is but labour and sorrow. Yet, strange to say, the most active part of his own life began when he was eighty years old. It is a mistake to think of him as a young man when he found GOD in the burning bush and received his commission to deliver Israel. He was then very old, schooled by adversity, and patient through long trials and heavy work. I know no other instance of a man beginning to make a great place in the world at such an advanced age.

I often ponder over the view which Moses had of GOD. It was high and exalted, it had much tenderness, and beauty, and it served him well.

He would never have so earnestly and so frequently urged the Israelites to love and fear GOD, unless he had truly loved and feared GOD himself. But how thankful we may be that we now see GOD visible in Christ, Whose Name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. How different from what Moses saw !

I am glad to think that Moses was with Christ at His transfiguration, and communed with Him of Calvary. At last the prohibition from entering the

Holy Land had been withdrawn, and he found himself blessed and honoured in the Canaan that he loved.

Always he had sought GOD and desired Him first—refusing all the treasures of Egypt for His sake, and accepting all the pains and weariness of the Exodus.

Not every one "can see GOD in a bush." Mrs. Browning has said :

"Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God,  
But only *he who sees* takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."

GOD grant that you and I may have our eyes opened to see Him everywhere. And, above all, may we see Him in Christ, perfect man, and perfect GOD.

The inspiration of Moses is a difficult subject, and one that I do not think it well to leave untouched. Many of you have no difficulties about it, but to others it is a great puzzle. To such, I would say (as I always say), "Face it." When the ostrich feels its enemies coming close, it is said to stupidly hide its head in the sand, and to imagine that it is safe because it neither sees nor hears its foe. And many people deal with religious and other difficulties after the same fashion. They avoid thinking of troubles and anxieties lest they should become distressed by them. It is curious how many people avoid making their wills because they will not face death if they can help it, and what trouble and mischief their foolishness causes. In this way the Church of Rome deals with intellectual

difficulties. And consequently it produces a company of slaves to superannuated authority. It dares not admit mistakes which in the past were almost excusable, but which now-a-days are disgraceful (on such subjects as astronomy, hell, purgatory, and the marriage of the clergy).

The same spirit is often shown by other good people. I remember, when I was a young man, being struck with the way in which certain clergymen with whom I was working, became actually cross, and almost bullying, if a question was asked them on some point which they felt would not bear probing. How silly and short-sighted this was. For, of course, every enquirer felt immediately that doctrines were held not because they were true, but for some other (good or bad) reason. Children of GOD need never be afraid of truth. For He, Who is the Way, is also Himself the truth and the Life. It is better to have living, pulsating belief, even if it is imperfect, than to profess a belief that is dead like a mummy—even, and well balanced, till its weight is tested, but then sure to prove lop-sided.

Religion is a growing, living thing. Christ tells us that the man who is least in the Kingdom of GOD is greater than even John the Baptist, though He says at the same time that no man born of woman could be a greater prophet than he was. This *seems* (like many other things in the Bible) to be a contradiction, but it is not. And so strongly did St. Paul feel the importance of *growing* in the knowledge of GOD, that he

tells us that even in the prison in Rome he bent his aged knees in prayer that his Ephesian converts might have the gift of increased knowledge of God.

Moses was a greater man than any of us, but in some things he was behind even the Christian *child* of to-day. Our Lord emphasises this progress when He tells the Jews that, for the hardness of their hearts, Moses made the law of divorce, but that GOD'S original way was higher and better, and that the time was come when this higher law ought to be obeyed.

Inspiration is a glorious and Divine thing, but it works very differently, according to the medium through which it shines. I have lately been staying at Mr. Ruskin's old home, Brantwood, and I have been seeing his beatiful collection of gems. Among them was a large diamond, which, because it was still rough, uncut, and unpolished, looked only like a dull piece of glass, though it contained all its treasures (undisplayed) of dazzling brilliance. There were also opals, which were half buried in the rock, and which looked colourless, till I turned the specimen into the right light. *Then they became as rainbows.* And so it is with GOD'S truth in the Bible. Some parts of it (as the discourses of Christ and passages in the Epistles) are cut and polished, and glorious, while in other portions, the light comes broken and dimmed through the human medium which contains it. For instance, our Lord does not say it was *wrong* of Elijah to call down fire from Heaven and destroy the offend-



ing cities, but He *does* reprove His disciples for proposing to follow such an example. St. Paul himself, is not certain whether or not he is speaking by the Spirit of GOD when he is expressing his views about widows marrying again.

We do not know how long it took to make the world, but we know that GOD called it good in its earlier stages while there were no green grasses or herbs visible, and no life of beast or man. It all increased in beauty and goodness till it reached its best.

The world was young in the days of Moses, and the Divine light was still sometimes obscured. Compare the Song and the blessing of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy, with Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and you will see at once how different are the degrees of manifestation of GOD'S mind. In the words of Moses, we see, as it were, the rainbow light of the opal often appearing with great loveliness out of the earth and rock which imbedded it, but there is also much national and personal selfishness visible, and there exhibitions of anger and destructiveness which even a child of to-day can see would be impossible in the Sermon on the Mount. Such words as "I will provoke them to anger," "I will heap mischiefs upon them," "I would scatter them into corners, were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy," are instances of what I mean. Mr. Carlile and I were grieving lately over a malignant article in the newspaper, where the writer had collected together the objections of infidels

to the Bible narrative, and had set them down as if he had discovered them. They read very plausibly, but there was not one to which a complete and satisfactory answer could not have been given. In many cases the reply would be that the thing objected to was never praised in the Bible. To others the answer would be given on the principles I have just stated.

Do not, then, be afraid of facing such difficulties, for only by facing them can they be overcome. Moses told us GOD'S mind, as far as he knew it, but doubtless he knew it much better when he came with Elijah to the Holy Mount, and better still, after he had spoken with Christ of "His decease, which He should shortly accomplish at Jerusalem."

When he shone with Christ on the mount of transfiguration, his prayer in the 90th Psalm, that the beauty of the Lord might be upon him, was surely answered.

Let us hold fast to every word of our Bible then, but let us take it for what it *claims* to be—a Divine record and a sure guide. It would be far less interesting and valuable if it did not contain the human element as well as the Divine.

Most of you have probably felt this kind of difficulty in the first chapter of Exodus, where we are told of the good deeds which the midwives did (because they feared GOD) in saving alive the Hebrew children. They lied about it to Pharaoh, and yet we are told that GOD dealt well with the midwives, and prospered them on account of their action. It is like the

story of Rahab and the spies, and of Jael, later on. The point is, that GOD judges people according to their light. Faults that are committed in ignorance are punished (Christ says) with few stripes. The Israelites, when they destroyed the Canaanites, were doing right, according to their conscience, and they are honoured and praised accordingly. But our *Christian* conscience would not allow us to follow their example in the letter, for the laws of truth, love, mercy, and universal brotherhood have been brought to light by the Gospel of Christ.

It is a question of growth and education. No one finds fault with an untrained dog for fighting and hunting and biting. But it is possible to educate a dog to different manners, and if it misbehaves after being taught better, it is punished. What is no fault at one time, may become a fault later on.

It does not seem to me that there is more difficulty in believing that GOD should have used the swords of the Israelites to destroy nations, than that He should use cholera, or plague, or the fires which rained over Sodom and Gomorrah (and later on over Herculaneum and Pompeii). The extermination of nations before the normal time of death may be an act of mercy, and the very best thing for themselves and others.

We must not then allow ourselves to be perplexed by judging the people of long ago by our own present standard. The same principle applies to the colloquies which are related as taking place between GOD

and Moses, and also between GOD and Abraham. GOD is there, but He shines through an earthly medium, and the record has in it a human and personal element. Water may be clear as crystal, and perfectly pure and good, but it looks green if put into a green bottle, and Moses was no doubt often as a green bottle which makes the water look discoloured, except when it overflows and shows its crystal clearness. We must read with this knowledge such passages as those which seem to say that Abraham and Moses were kinder and wiser than GOD, and that they persuaded Him to be more merciful than He had intended to be. A Christian child now is, I hope, taught that GOD is Love, and Almighty Love, and that every man gets *from* GOD whatever love and kindness He Himself has, and that he uses it, not to alter GOD'S Providence, but in accordance with the Divine law that the prayers and unselfish desires of men shall be the very means by which blessings come to His creatures.

If any of you are troubled with difficulties do not hesitate to write to me, and I will endeavour to answer them. Many difficulties arise simply from the impudence of infidels who assert deliberate untruths.

We can only glance at the history of the three divisions (of 40 years each) in the life of Moses. First, we find him as a babe, with his life threatened in the same way that Christ's life was threatened by Herod after His birth. His mother hid him for three months, and then committed him to the Nile, in an ark of

bulrushes daubed with pitch. Then he was drawn out from the water (a prefiguring perhaps of baptism) and adopted by Merrhis, the Princess of Egypt, in whose court he was brought up.

There is much tradition about his early history, and a great deal of it is probably true. You may find it splendidly described in the first volume of Stanley's "Jewish Church." It is said that at three years old he trampled under foot the crown which Pharaoh playfully put on his head. Tradition says that his beauty and size were almost miraculous. St. Stephen tells us that he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Tradition also says that he was a distinguished and successful warrior.

But as he grew up he recognised his relationship to God's people, the Israelites, and finally he refused to be called the son of the childless Princess—"esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," and "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the children of GOD."

Then comes the story of his rescuing an Israelite who was being ill-used by an Egyptian. He slew the latter and buried him in the sand. The next day he was taunted with this action by one of two Israelites whom he tried to separate as they quarrelled. He seems then to have been stricken with fear, as Elijah was later on stricken with fear by the words of Jezebel. And, like him, he fled to the wilderness. He was imperfect and often erring as the rest of us are.

The next period of his life was passed in Midian, alone among the grandeur of those wild and terrific mountains which travellers still gaze on with awe.

By his gallantry and courtesy as a young man he had won the goodwill of Jethro, the priest of Midian. It is pleasant to read the story of Moses at the well, and of the girls—one of whom afterwards became his wife. We know little of the long preparation for his future work which the solitude and dangerous life of a shepherd brought about, but when he was 80 years old the great call came from GOD out of the burning bush, and he obeyed it. Solitude is a grand preparation for a Divine work. We can, none of us, get along without *some* solitude, and we know what sacrifices Christ made to obtain it in His busy life.

The chapters which tell us of his call are among the most interesting in the Old Testament. Try and imagine the scene. Picture the lonely exiled man, shepherding sheep in the desert among the great precipitous mountains. No doubt he felt keenly his banishment from the land where his countrymen were living, and none the less because he had left it in consequence of trying and failing to help and deliver them from the cruelty and tyranny of their enemies. It is when misfortunes are brought about by our own faults that we are most to be pitied for them. But silly people think they are absolved from giving either pity or help if they can say "Serve him right."

One day in the wilderness Moses sees a "great sight"—a bush (no doubt one of the thorny acacias

which are still common in the district) blazing with fire, but not consumed. And from the bush GOD calls to him and tells him that the ground where he stands is holy. "I am GOD, I have seen the affliction of My people. I know their sorrows. Their cry is come unto Me. I am come to deliver them. I will send thee to Pharoah that thou may'st bring forth My people out of Egypt. Certainly I will be with Thee. I am that I am."

It was a tremendous commission, and four times we read that Moses shrank from accepting it. First, because he felt he was nobody. Secondly, because he felt sure the people would not believe him. Thirdly, because he was slow of speech. Fourthly, from combined reasons which made him plead that someone else might be sent. To this last appeal God replied that Aaron, his brother (whom I suppose he had not seen for forty years) should go with him and help him. Then He promised that He Himself would be with him, and He gave him three signs by which the people should be convinced.

Unwillingness, or hesitation in accepting a great vocation is not always a bad thing. It is better to weigh the difficulties, and count the cost, than to be as he who said: "I go, sir," and went not. The man who volunteered to follow Christ wherever He went had to be checked, and told of the stern difficulties of the way.

It is no wonder that Moses shrank four times from the task presented to him. The difficulties were

appalling. But after this interview with God he never shrank again. (How different was the story in Shakespeare's great tragedy of Hamlet. *He* was on fire to act on receiving his commission, but almost immediately he cooled down, and fell into a depressed and inactive state.)

It particularly concerns us to note the three signs by which the commission of Moses was attested.

He complained that he was nobody, and that he had no power; and God said: "What is that in thine hand?"

"A Rod."

"Cast it on the ground."

And it became a serpent from which Moses fled.

He had thought little of the insignificant stick which he held, but as he had already learned that GOD was in the bush, so now he was to learn that there was Divine power even in the stick.

"Take it," said GOD.

And he caught the serpent and it was again a rod.

But henceforth it was GOD'S rod, filled with power and able to work miracles. Able also later on to burst into delicate blossoms and fruit.

And now too, is there not power in a stick for support, or correction, or leaves and flowers?

It is not hard to see the meaning of the "sign." What seemed only a useful support, when it "fell" to the earth became an evil and dangerous foe—a serpent—emblem of sensuality and sin. But in GOD'S power it was faced and overcome, and henceforth 't meant power and blessing.



It reminds us of the story of the fierce lion which Samson slew, and which afterwards produced honey.

Both stories are parables of the great mystery of evil, allowed, overcome, and transformed. How wonderful it is that in like manner the disease of an oyster should change into a pearl, and that the very gates of heaven should be twelve pearls.

Moses would always remember henceforth how the rod of GOD which he carried, and with which he worked wonders, might become a serpent at any moment. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Have *we* not known a rod of power and blessing fall to the ground and become a curse of sensuality and earthliness? Let us beware of casting our rods *to the ground*. I remember the Bishop of London saying with great effect that strong passion when controlled or in subjection became an immense power for blessing others.

The second sign was like the first. The innocent hand was thrust into the bosom and came out leprous, and then it changed back again to health and vigour. This is indeed a sign which seldom fails, for all can see that for a sinful man to be made holy is a miracle of GOD'S power. That which is good becomes too easily corrupted and leprous. But by GOD'S grace it may be restored to greater work and greater power.

The third sign—that of turning water into blood, and back again into water—has the same significance as the other two, but I think the lesson lies deeper still. I wish I could tell you the mystery of blood, but

I cannot, for I know too little of it myself. "The blood is the life," and yet it is connected with sin and has an intoxicating power of its own. And we are told that blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD. It is enough perhaps for us to note here that the changing of water to blood meant an awful curse, loathsome and terrible, but that GOD was ready to change it back again when it had done its work.

Such was the call of Moses. And what followed?  
*A great deliverance.*

Of the thrilling narrative—told us so graphically—of the plagues of Egypt and the Exodus, we will not write at length.

It is the story of war to the death between GOD'S servant and the mighty Pharaoh, who is the type of the highest earthly grandeur.

It is not certain which of the Pharaohs it is who is described in the Exodus. The three principal historical names of the Pharaohs are Seti, Rameses, and Merenptah. During the 400 years which the Israelites spent in bondage, they must certainly have served under the great Rameses II., who was perhaps the most tremendous figure in the history of the world. The power of these Egyptian kings was awful in their time. Where are they now? I must quote for you the following lines by Shelley :

" I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said, 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone,  
Stand in the desert ; near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read,  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things.  
The hand that mocked man, and the heart that fed.  
And on the pedestal these words appear :  
' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings ;  
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair ! ' ”  
*Nothing beside remains.* Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

It is wonderful that we should have not only the description of Rameses, but his actual embalmed body preserved in Cairo. I know the photograph of it by heart, and no one who has ever seen it can ever forget its look of scornful calm, and of unchallenged irresistible strength. The nose is aquiline, the lip is curled, the expression is one of supreme haughtiness.

It was indeed a “battle royal” between earthly grandeur and heavenly power.

The Israelites crossed the Red Sea dryshod, and soon after they came to Midian where Moses had passed the last 40 years of his life, and where he was now again welcomed by his father-in-law.

What splendid advice Jethro gave him ! He was a friend well worth having, so hearty and sympathetic, rejoicing with those that rejoiced, and yet taking stock of the difficulties and helping accordingly. His advice should be helpful to every one of us Church Army people. To delegate authority wisely (as he advised Moses to do) is one of the chief duties of leaders. There is an old saw which says, “If you want a thing done, do it yourself,” but it has been adapted even more wisely into “If you want a thing done get somebody else to do it.”

This does not mean idleness, but increased work. And it also means that when we fail, from death or various causes, the work still goes on and prospers. The business of setting other people to work is a matter both delicate and onerous, but without it a man or woman is half a failure. In the Church Army we have had one or two good workers who have failed in this matter. They wanted to keep every thing in their own hands, either from a good motive or from a mistaken ambition, and so the work became small and imperfect, whereas those who gave prominence to others have gradually triumphed. You know how true this is in a C.A. Station. If an Officer wishes to do all the speaking himself, and if he keeps all details of the work in his own hands, he cannot accomplish much. But if he wins a band of willing workers round him, and trusts them, and gives them the opportunity of shining, then many souls are won, and he is justly regretted and missed when he leaves. Study carefully the chapter about Jethro, and follow his good advice. I love to read his talk with Moses—so hearty, wise, sound, business-like, and rejoicing. He was a friend who was pure gold, and we can imagine how happy and refreshed Moses was after their talk. How different our visits of consolation often are! When we want to cheer people up it not unfrequently happens that we begin with some tale of another friend's misfortunes or faults with which we enliven them, and then proceed to mere gossiping chatter, and when we leave the house we feel that we

have effected nothing but a little temporary, good-natured brightening up. I myself feel very guilty on this score.

I do not entirely condemn such visits, but there ought to be more in them than mere good nature. Some people minister God's grace continually. Those who know, for instance, the Bishop of St. Andrews, know that no one leaves his company without a lift heavenwards. And it is the same with our Bishop of London.

Let us next consider thoughtfully the only sin which is recorded in the conduct of Moses. He was once "provoked" and "spake unadvisedly with his lips."

And in consequence of this single failure he was debarred from entering the Holy Land.

There must have been more behind it, I should almost think, than appears in the narrative. But it is recorded for our profit, and is worth careful consideration.

What happened was that, shortly after crossing the Red Sea the people were afflicted with thirst, and murmured because there was no water for them. GOD told Moses to "smite" the rock (Exodus xvii. 6), or to "speak" to it (Numbers xx. 8), or probably to do both. He gathered the people together, and in his anger he said to them "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

Then he lifted up his hand and with his rod he smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly.

Then the Lord spake and said, "Because ye believed

Me not to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

I think this story ought to humble us in the dust. For who is there of us that has not done worse than Moses!

How great his punishment was for one comparatively slight fault. How often has our offence been greater. He sinned by a thought, followed by an angry word.

It was his one fault apparently—a fault of temper, and its consequences remained all his life long.

It seems terrible, but the same thing happens still.

I can think of four instances in my experience where the mischief of an angry word proved indelible, and lasted on and on in spite of the sorrow and repentance of the wrong-doer, and the forgiveness of the injured person. A harsh, cruel, unjust, angry thing was (alas! alas!) said, and years of good conduct and kindness could not remove its scar. It remained.

Thanks be to GOD, it is not thus with most of our sins. Greater faults than angry words are not only forgiven, but forgotten. But *how careful* we ought to be. Temper is no doubt one of the sins of which St. Paul speaks of as "going before to judgment." It is punished *here*, and generally severely punished. It leaves wounds and bruises on both sides. The offender (if offending frequently) is sooner or later left by nearly every valuable friend and acquaintance, and has to live a solitary, neglected life, and to die deserted. And "It serves them right," is the verdict of the world. Poor, bad-tempered people!

I do not think temper is nearly the worst of faults ; but I think it is the one most severely punished here. Do not treat it lightly yourself. Do not think it a sufficient excuse that you were provoked, or tired, or ill. Use GOD'S grace, and hold your tongue till the danger is passed. If you give way to it you may turn your best friend and worker to coldness and hostility.

I think that most of us are blessed with good and happy tempers, but sometimes the best men have hasty tempers. Just lately I have had two first rate officers who have failed in this respect, and who have had to suffer accordingly. And I want to impress upon you the fact that it is not only right and Christlike to keep our tempers, but also most wise and *prudent*. Some people get through what would be squabbles with difficult people by an almost exaggerated politeness. But *without* exaggeration, it is possible to be so sweet mannered and courteous that we put others in the wrong if they are hasty and violent. And by such politeness we are almost sure to win the day. Temper is always a sign of weakness, and it gives an opportunity for even an inferior opponent to triumph.

How foolish it is if a vicar or curate speaks unkindly and roughly to answer back in the same vein. How wise was our LORD'S example of silence. Prayer and Christian love are what are needed in such circumstances. It is not surprising that wise, and gentle-spirited men and women are everywhere desired, while those who are tactless and hasty and inclined to be rude in their manners, are cheerfully said good-

bye to, and are very difficult to place in fresh stations.

It needs discipline to be always kind, courteous, and patient. But it is worth a great deal.

#### THE FINAL BLESSING OF THE TRIBES.

Moses and the patriarch Jacob both poured forth, just before their death, an inspired blessing on the tribes of Israel.

Jacob spoke as a father, and Moses only as a leader and prophet, but the blessing of Moses far exceeds Jacob's in tenderness, in beauty, and I should say in degree of inspiration.

Resentment against his children's bad conduct still seems strong in Jacob, and the parts of his utterance referring to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are more like curses than blessings. Pride in his sons (especially in Judah) is more evident than affection. Even of the beloved Benjamin he fails to speak tenderly. His blessing of Joseph, however, is the exception, for in praising him he kindles into love, and fervour, and poetry. Perhaps beyond their relationship to him he had not much cause to love, at any rate, *nine*, of his sons. We hear little good of them.

But with Moses the case was different. His delight in the tribes whom he had brought out of Egypt was the delight almost of ownership. In spite of their sins and shortcomings, he loved them. He gives no blame to anyone, and the praise is warm. Simeon alone is left out (as Dan is left out in the 7th chapter of Revelation, which records the sealing of the tribes). Levi's curse by Jacob is outworn, and his loyalty and



his honours are recounted. Benjamin is no longer said to "raven as a wolf," but is to be tenderly protected by God. For Joseph the blessing overflows. The whole chapter is studded with sweet and beautiful sayings. The "motive" of the Divine ninetyeth Psalm appears in the 27th verse.

After this farewell blessing, and after his song of praise, in which he sings, "GOD is the rock, His way is perfect," Moses slowly ascended Mount Nebo in the sight of all the people. They must have watched him with beating hearts and tear-stained faces, remembering how bravely and with what love he had brought them out of Egypt, and had cared for them and forgiven them all these forty years. Now he was going up alone to yield his soul to GOD. Further and further he went, until at last he was lost in the mountain tops.

He, the noblest of them all, was, for his one fault, not to enter the Holy Land, but only to see it afar off, while they—saved and blessed—were to enter in and possess it. How often this has happened.

"So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, according to the Word of the LORD, and He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab. And they wept for Moses thirty days, and the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended, and Joshua, the son of Nun, stood in his place."

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I cannot say what a happiness our May Conference was. The officers, men and women, came in splen-

did form, and I think the speaking and the spirit were better than ever. Again and again it was said: "This is the best we ever had." It troubled me that we could not hear quite all your voices, and that many of those who did speak, spoke in such a noise that it must have been a trial to them. But I know that they will forgive, and I may say that the young officers rose in our opinion who accepted this trial and spoke as well as they did in the midst of a friendly din. It showed real humility and grace to do this, and counted for a great deal.

Where everything was so happy, one has difficulty in sounding a note of warning. I think the point on which I am most anxious is that none of us should be what Mr. Carlile calls "too respectable," and too much like lay curates. There is no doubt a temptation this way, especially as many of the clergy cannot be expected to be as warm about our more aggressive methods as we are ourselves. Still, we consider an officer a *failure* if he gets into a way of having just the Church Service in the ordinary way, without after meetings, extempore prayer, or any real grip on individual souls. Remember we "go for" outsiders before we go for respectable Churchgoers, and our bait must be for *them*, and not for well-behaved religious people who ought to be attending the regular Church services (except when they come to us as workers).

God bless us all.

E.C.

September, 1903.

DEAR COMRADES,

I love to note how you have gone on from strength to strength.

How many people are ignorant of the fact that miracles are performed by God's Holy Spirit which change unhappy sinning men and women into happy, good and useful people. We call it conversion.

Let us never forget that this change is a *real down-right miracle*, GOD is everywhere, and we all—good and bad—live and move and breathe in Him. Wherever GOD is there Christ may be seen by faith. And wherever Christ is believed in, there the soul which He has loved and died for may be forgiven, and receive strength and power to overcome evil and Satan. Of course I do not mean that those who receive Christ as their Saviour and Master never sin again. For they do. But they have learnt what it is to be forgiven, cleansed and fresh started. They have begun to know One who forgives them seventy times seven. They have obtained a Friend to Whom they can speak at all times of dangers and troubles and sins. They know the meaning of those eternal words: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as wool." It is the gift of GOD our Father, Who

(having created us) naturally loves us and provides for us.

This is the salvation which night after night is declared near the Marble Arch by our C.A. men and women. I know no work so joyful as bringing others into the power and joy of it. May we all be experts in such service.

Let us study to-day, for our profit, the character of  
BALAAM, THE SEER.

It is one of the most dreadful in the Bible, because his outside was fair and honoured, and his gifts great, while underneath, there lurked a seed of depravity, kept in check for years by circumstances, but able to blossom hideously when its time came, and to ruin, not only the man himself, but also the wretched people who were involved in the evil which it had created.

Remember that a habit of perverse desire indulged contrary to the will of GOD may land a religious man or woman *in the abyss itself*.

It is awful but it is true.

I know men and women who have been thus sucked in by the whirlpool of unresisted temptation.

At this moment I know men and women who are *in danger* of being thus sucked in.

Beware of tampering with anything which is ever so little *evil*—whether it be the evil of the world, the flesh or the devil—pride, wilfulness, sensuality, or hatred.

GOD be praised for that morning hour of prayer

and communion when His "yes" and His "no" can be discerned by the soul that listens. A forbidden friendship, a resentful wish, or a wilful desire, may then be discovered in its true light and firmly denied and discarded. At our soul's peril we tamper with it. Balaam persistently encouraged a hostile malevolent feeling towards the Israelitish nation. He knew that his thought was contrary to the mind of GOD. But yet he cherished his evil desire, and therefore the whole atmosphere of his soul was turbid. Again and again he seemed to be refusing the evil bait. But while his words were right he kept his heart wrong.

He preached and prophesied magnificently, but each time (after the Spirit of GOD had possessed and inspired him) he went back to his devilish animosity, and after all his apparent triumph of grace he accomplished his evil will by seducing the Israelites—whom he had against his will blessed—into fornication. Finally, he was slain in battle, fighting desperately against GOD'S people.

Sins travel in companies and work together to get the devil his way. Malignity and wilfulness found covetousness and ambition dormant in Balaam's heart and they all conspired for his destruction, and at last they accomplished it.

In this tragedy there are five principal factors. They are enacted by the vast, silent, overwhelming hordes of Israelites, by Balaam the prophet (the man who thought wrong and said right), by Balak, the heathen king of Moab; by the patient ass who said so strangely

little when the power of speech was given to him, and by the unchangeable and Almighty God.

The story begins with the Israelites pitching their tents in the plains of Moab, by the River Jordan, and in view of the Promised Land.

On their left was the Dead Sea. Above them and behind them, were the wild mountains of Moab, rising like a level wall against the sky. (This landscape is well portrayed in Holman Hunt's picture of "The Scapegoat," which many of you must know. I have been to the place.)

The fated Jericho, the beautiful "city of palm trees," was beyond the river in front of them. It was built on the plains of Jordan and the Dead Sea, which were the site, 400 years earlier, of Sodom and Gomorrah.

To the right, and looking towards the north, flowed the Jordan, making the country green wherever its waters came.

On this background, the figures of Balak and Balaam appear, and play their parts.

Our condemnation of Balak is not severe, for he was but a heathen king, and he acted as heathen kings would naturally act. He was roused by fear to send for the prophet Balaam, and to use all means to induce him, by spells and curses, to withstand his enemies.

He recognises, all through his disappointments, Balaam's wish to oblige him. They were confederates in evil, and they come to grief and they quarrel as

such confederates almost always do. A time came when Balak was incensed with Balaam beyond self-control. He smote his hands together and gave passionate vent to his reproaches and threats. "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold thou hast altogether blest them these three times. Flee to thy place. I thought to promote thee to great honour, but the LORD hath kept thee back from honour."

He had lost all hope in Balaam and knew not that the wretched man, who was one with him in intention, would one day serve him more efficiently than by cursing.

The superstition of Balak about curses was like the superstition of people nowadays about omens and bad luck. They seem to suppose that the omen does not so much foretell or indicate a misfortune as create it. Balak thought that a malign curse would actually bring disaster to the Israelites, and not merely announce it. But "The curse causeless shall not come." Who is he that shall harm us if we are followers of that which is good:

Balaam might have cursed all day and done no harm to anyone but himself. Alas, he had a more deadly weapon in reserve than cursing.

Balak's is an uncomplicated character, which we easily take stock of.

But we have a very different feeling about Balaam. In spite of some fine qualities there is something repulsive about his character all through the story—Religiousness with badness is so much worse than badness without religion.

Even in his final sad words there is no touch of softness and humanity. He was hard, cold, ambitious, and merciless both to his enemies and to his ass. Whether he was particularly cruel to animals we do not know. To strike a donkey three times when it refused to go on was nothing very extraordinary.

Real kindness and consideration for animals may be called almost a modern virtue, and among many nations England cannot boast much; for only ninety-two years ago Lord Erskine stood up in our House of Lords to plead against the horrible cruelties practised on animals in our streets—Festering sores, weakness, lameness, and brutal treatment were then the rule and not the exception. But Lord Erskine's plea against cruelty was met only with derision and jeers. Thank God there is now a marked change, and we may certainly be glad that our country has led the crusade which is gradually conquering callous and wicked cruelty to animals. Each one of us is bound to do his or her best in this movement.

He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

Even in Italy and Spain there is a change for the better which everyone can see.

A strong determined protest is needed against the abuses of vivisection, or cruel scientific experiments on living animals. We had hoped that these practices were so controlled in England that no cruel experiments were possible, but I am afraid it has recently



been proved that horrible things have been done lately, even in our midst. It appears that in one of our London hospitals a dog was tortured repeatedly in the supposed interests of science. It is a story that makes one's blood run cold. In foreign countries the cruelties of vivisection are appalling, but we did hope that our country was purged of them, and did not need to be told that to do wrong is never justifiable.

This is a digression from our story, but a needed one.

Balaam's history previous to his sudden introduction into the sacred narrative is hidden in mystery. We are told that he lived at Pethor, in Mesopotamia, near the river Euphrates, and within measurable distance of the countries of Moab and Canaan.

How much or how little he knew about the Israelites we cannot say. At all events, he was their determined enemy. But yet he knew, and in a way, served the true GOD, and he had a high reputation as a religious man. Balak treated him with honour, and testified, "I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

This kind of religious distinction is not seldom won by Church Army Officers. The outside world recognises their value as brave, working people who have GOD'S blessing with them, and whom it is worth while to conciliate. They have given proofs of influence which cannot be gainsaid, and they are not to be despised. But Balaam's dangers are their dangers too, and it is for this reason that we are to-day considering this deplorable history. I should

much like to know how he—far away, and apart from GOD'S people—came to know and worship their GOD. His doing so is one of the many proofs that GOD did not leave Himself without witness among the heathen. The stories of Job, Melchisedec, Cyrus, and others, all witness to this great fact which St. Paul so firmly declares to us in the second of Romans. "The Lord is loving unto every man." But often our ignorance blinds us to the proof of it. GOD is, and always will be, "a faithful Creator."

But Balaam had the fatal fault of "perverseness" against GOD.

We shall lose our lesson if we paint him in blacker colours than the Bible uses.

And in the first place we must remember that it was not unnatural that Balaam should be the enemy of the Israelites. They were to him a strange, foreign people, who were sweeping all before them, and who might invade his own country for all he knew. Their national characteristics were not such as would commend them to a stranger. They were a fierce, intolerant, and in some ways, an unscrupulous people.

Therefore his personal interests and sympathies were with King Balak, who was naturally alarmed at the prospect of his territory being invaded, and his goods confiscated. Balak heartily wished, on all grounds, that the inroad of the Israelites should be a failure, and he determined to do his best to make it so. Therefore he sent for Balaam, to curse. And Balaam had all the will to please him.

We cannot blame either Balaam or ourselves for sometimes having a strong inclination or bias in one direction. It is only natural that it should be so. The sin comes when we indulge it contrary to the will of GOD.

Ought Balaam to have thought that GOD could change? This is a difficult question, for, as a matter of fact, GOD *did* change His command in the beginning of the story. His first command was that Balaam should have nothing to do with Balak and the princes of Moab. Had this order been obeyed *in the spirit and in the letter* all would have been well for Balaam, and his record would have been good, instead of bad.

But he longed to curse the Israelites, and in his second application to GOD for leave to do so, the command was so far relaxed that he was told to go with the princes if they came to him in the morning, but yet not to speak anything but what GOD bade him speak. And thus it was that by his own desire Balaam began to enter into temptation.

Let us each one pause and judge ourselves, if we have tampered or are tampering with any Divine command.

\* \* \* \*

It is not quite clear from the narrative, exactly what Balaam did the morning after he received his orders from GOD, but evidently he did not exactly obey them. He rose up early, saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And yet it looks as if he and his ass and his servant were *alone* when the angel

of the Lord met him in the vineyard. Three times the angel faced the disobedient prophet without being recognized. Twice Balaam managed to elude him, but the third time there was no space to turn, either to the right or to the left. And then his eyes were opened, and he saw the angel.

He had evidently left home in a bad temper, and it is not difficult to account for this. For he knew he had done wrong, and doubtless his fault had made him irritable and uncomfortable. And so he vented his angry spleen on the ass.

When he was obliged to desist he showed only a forced repentance. He did not confess his root sins, which were malignity and covetousness, but he grudgingly said "If it displease thee I will get me back again."

Many a man and woman comes to a pass when they would be willing to "get them back again," but when they find it is not possible to retrace their steps.

Nevertheless, after this interview we may consider that Balaam was to some degree cleansed from his sin, and there seems a gleam of rightness about him when he comes to Balak and says "Have I now power at all to speak anything? The word that GOD putteth in my mouth that shall I speak."

How strange Balaam and Balak were in their persistent offering of oxen and sheep to GOD. As if He would be persuaded by such wretched, futile bribes to give them their will! One sees GOD'S contempt of such devices every time that they were offered.

Balaam's first blessing of the tribes is scarcely a blessing. It is unwilling and grudging praise, and it rings wrong all through, as also do his concluding words, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like His." What we sow we reap, and it is idle to wish to die happily if we live wrongly.

This is not a mere old story, alas! it is a lesson for you and me to-day. Like all Holy Scripture it was written for our profit.

How hard the grace of GOD struggled with this man! How wonderfully he was forgiven and freshly started! But the forces of evil were fighting too, and in league with the desire of his heart. Ambition and avarice reinforced the active evil of his hatred of GOD'S chosen people. Then followed infamy, destruction, and death, and "the rest is silence."

Perhaps all along Balaam had half deceived himself. We are so apt to do this! Perhaps he called his hatred of the Israelites by the fine name of patriotism, and counted his desire after Balak's friendship, and honour and gifts as only a lawful desire to rise in the world. But the wheels of fate showed the truth, and now—for all time—Balaam, the Son of Beor, "who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and was rebuked for his transgression by an ass," is a beacon for our warning. He is compared to a spring without water; a tree without fruit, twice dead and plucked up by the roots; a wild wave of the sea, foaming out its own shame; a wandering star for whom the blackness of eternal darkness is reserved.

I find myself almost trembling as I write these words. GOD be thanked for His unfailing love and grace. May you and I never abuse them.

In the earlier part of the story Balaam was forced against his will to say and to do right. But his evil heart developed into worse. Yet still he found it impossible to prophesy falsely. Recognising GOD kept him straight.

But there came a time when he was so determined on evil, that he decided to act no longer as a prophet, but simply as a bad man. He no longer sought GOD, but endeavoured to avoid Him. Not again did he have recourse to his miserable burnt offerings. He had found out that they were useless. He simply set his face towards the wilderness, and prepared to curse.

But again—for the last time—he was foiled.

In spite of himself the Spirit of GOD came upon him, and clearer than ever before he poured forth his blessing on the people whom he hated, concluding with the words: "Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, and cursed be every one that curseth thee."

Balak was furious, and assailed him with angry reproaches and threats. He tried to anger him against GOD. He seemed to have a peevish suspicion that he might have been better served if Balaam had chosen. But Balaam was no coward to be bullied by threats, and once more he spoke finely and bravely as always, but with the evil, depraved heart underneath all.

It is impossible not to admire the perfect fearless-

ness of Balaam : "Not for your house full of silver and gold can I go for good or bad beyond the word of the Lord. What the Lord speaketh that will I speak."

And then he gathered fresh strength and dignity for a final defiance. "Behold, I go unto my people," he said. "Come, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." And he took up his parable and spoke his last recorded words. Melancholy they were.

Balaam had no doubt about his inspiration. He heard and saw GOD, and knew GOD. But he was wretched and in despair, for he still hugged his sin, and *meant to do evil*. "I beheld Him, but not nigh," he declared. Sad, sad words! He probably knew that his vision of GOD was to get fainter and further, till darkness and distance swallowed it up.

"I beheld Him, but not nigh."

Do these words carry a timely warning of danger to any of us? It is very possible to behold GOD but *not nigh*; and for there to be even for a Christian worker an increasing distance and dimness of Divine vision. So that we may well cry—

"Nearer my God to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee."

It is not only *acts* of sin which cause the feet to slip backwards. Declension may come to pass merely from a pause in the spiritual life.

Had the story ended with the parting of the prophet and the King we should have felt very differently about Balaam. He had done right, though it was

against his own will. And how many are hedged and forced to do right, who have yet the will and the taste to do wrong! It is like Stevenson's wonderful story of Jekyll and Hyde. When the restraint is taken away, then comes the abyss. Who is there who would not have fallen at some time if he had not been restrained by Divine Power? How many of us must say "When my foot slipped, Thy mercy, O God, held me up"?

But this is not the end of the story. There came afterwards a horrible meeting between Balak and Balaam. When it took place we do not know. I suppose that he must have returned from his own place and given his diabolical advice to Balak, and then died fighting, slain by God's people in open war against those whom he had half ruined.

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like His," he had prayed. But he died the death of the wicked, and his last end was full of malign and devilish hatred.

Comrades, there are in us the forces of good and evil. Conflict is the law of our life here, and we cannot afford to be without it; for by conflict we become strong and fitted for a higher sphere. The temptations that assault us are common to all humanity. You know how vividly they are described in the 6th and 7th of Romans.

It rests with us to decide which side shall, by the grace of GOD, be victorious. Bishop Bryan once began a powerful sermon by saying: "There is a



person who dogs the footsteps of every bishop all through his life and work. *It is Satan.*"

Cannot we all say this of ourselves?

Was it not true of CHRIST?

And if Satan cannot absolutely wreck us, does he not—leagued with the evil in our hearts—damage us and maim us, so that we are weaker and less blessed in our work than we ought to be? I speak to myself as well as to you.

We have seen (and we can, I think, never forget) how GOD'S Spirit may work in a bad man and yet leave him worse than ever. Let the dreadful lesson lie deep in our remembrance.

But still more let us lay to heart, for ourselves and others, the happy truth of what the Holy Spirit can accomplish in all single-eyed men and women who, with sincere hearts, believe and receive. This is a matter which concerns everyone of us, whether we are in the Church Army or not.

Probably the best and most growing times of our life are those in which we discover for ourselves that some man or woman is a thousand times better than ourselves—more humble, or more self-denying, or more unselfish, or more unworldly, or more indifferent to praise.

Only last week I found myself telling Mr. Carlile how busy and tired I was, and what a lot of things I had had to do, etc., etc., etc. You know the sort of talk—talk which most of us are apt to fall into occasionally.

But a few minutes later it came to me that he was at that very time much more over-tired and over-busy than I was, and that he had said nothing about it, but only tried to help me and to sympathise. How little I should have learned the lesson if he had lectured me, and told me (even indirectly) to learn better from him!

I am now going to give you a very beautiful poem, which I advise you to read again and again till you can read it effectively, and then read it out some evening to your people. It is by James Montgomery:

A poor wayfaring man of grief  
 Hath often cross'd me on my way,  
 Who sued so humbly for relief,  
 That I could never answer "Nay;"  
 I had not power to ask his name,  
 Whither he went, or whence he came,  
 Yet there was something in his eye  
 That won my love; I know not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread  
 He entered; not a word he spake;  
 Just perishing for want of bread;  
 I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,  
 And ate, but gave me part again.  
 Mine was an angel's portion then;  
 For, while I fed with eager haste,  
 That crust was manna to my taste.

I spied him, where a fountain burst  
 Clear from the rock; his strength was gone  
 The heedless water mock'd his thirst;  
 He heard it—saw it hurrying on.  
 I ran to raise the sufferer up  
 Thrice from the stream he drained my cup  
 Dipt, and returned it running o'er;  
 I drank, and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out; it blew  
 A winter hurricane aloof;  
 I heard his voice abroad, and flew  
 To bid him welcome to my roof.

I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,  
Laid him on my own couch to rest ;  
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed  
In Eden's garden while I dream'd.

Stript, wounded, beaten nigh to death  
I found him by the highway side ;  
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,  
Revived his spirit, and supplied  
Wine, oil, refreshment ; he was healed ;  
I had myself a wound concealed ;  
But from that hour forgot the smart,  
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next, condemned,  
To die a traitor's death at morn ;  
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,  
And honoured him midst shame and scorn.  
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,  
He asked, if I for him would die ?  
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,  
But the free spirit cried, " I will ! "

Then in a moment to my view  
The stranger darted from disguise ;  
The tokens in His hands I knew ;  
Christ Jesus stood before mine eyes !  
He spoke ; and my poor name He named ;  
" Of me thou hast not been ashamed ;  
These deeds shall thy memorial be ;  
Fear not ! thou didst them unto Me ! "

Farewell, dear comrades. May God give us all  
grace of loyalty, obedience, love, and power. May  
He fill each one of us, for our special need, with the  
Holy Spirit. It is good to be thinking of you all on  
this happy Sunday morning.

E.C.

May, 1902.

DEAR COMRADES,

It is a very happy thing to be a Secretary of the Church Army, and to see how *God wins the victory* as life advances. How often the failures and deficiencies of His people disappear as they get older. "God is Love," and "Love never faileth." This is a foundation that never gives way, but is firm in every crisis. It is true *also*, however, that though God is winning the victory in us and by us, that He can only use us *so far as we are fitted* for service. He does not *discard* us because of our faults, but He chooses our work and path accordingly. Sometimes deterioration of a worker sets in, and before he knows it the man, as it were, goes down in his class. I know a case now of a splendid Christian who was bent on getting his way in a matter where every one else could see that he was wilful and mistaken, but against all advice he persisted, and then came the sad sight of fading light and power. There was a hitch everywhere, and he had to trade on past riches and to try and ignore present spiritual poverty.

As you know, I am a painter, and my paint brushes often remind me of our Officers. Valuable brushes are firm, pliant, and have fine delicate points, and are like our best Officers, obedient to the Master hand, and having the Divine wisdom and tact which enables

them to deal with difficult persons and difficult circumstances. Sometimes my brushes split, and get cracked, and then they are not much use for delicate kinds of work, though they can still be sometimes used for rough preparatory work. Workers often lose their *point* through selfishness or laziness. They get blunted and stupid without knowing it, and cease to be "instruments fit for the Master's service." I have one or two brushes which would be excellent if it were not that the hairs keep coming out of them. And I know some workers who seem to have a leakage somewhere. They may get on, and do well for a while, but there is some hidden besetting fault which lets out their grace.

It is a very serious thing if one of my brushes gets dirty and full of dry paint. It is never quite the same, even after it has been carefully washed. The delicacy and spring is gone from it. And in like manner it is most necessary for us to be in close personal communion with God *day by day*, so that every evil thing may be acknowledged and cleansed away by the Blood (or Life) of Christ. Do not wait till a fault gets hardened. Let it be acknowledged and washed away at once.

Let us feed our souls to-day on two living words, which occur several times in the Bible, notably in the 46th Psalm, where we read "BE STILL, and know that I am God."

"Be still."

I think that Christ must have loved these words

and used them often. Those who do great deeds generally love stillness. "Peace, be still," He loved to say.

They mean something quite different from those other comforting and much needed words of His "Rest awhile." Words which we in the Church Army all love, and I hope put in practice once a week. All need rest and refreshment, and God knew this when He gave us our Sunday, or our Sabbath, (for *Sunday* is not possible as a rest day for most of us.) (But let me say here that I find it impossible to make a weekday into a Sunday. I am sure that God keeps a special grace for Sunday, which is not available for a weekday however well it may be spent.

But besides the rest there is *stillness*. Christ often bade His disciples *do* things—work, or fish, or heal, or give, or preach—and evidently they obeyed Him with all their hearts. But here the command is "Be still, and know that I am God."

It is generally while we are still that we learn to know God, and are made ready for active service. What a beautiful thing stillness is—the stillness in which we can listen and receive. May God give this good gift to us as we need it. It very easily escapes if we do not guard it carefully.

I think most people are never really still, and seldom wish for stillness, except when they tell children to be quiet.

The stillness which is effective, and *means business*, is a very different thing from idleness or laziness. Idle

people are seldom really still, unless they are half asleep, but the quietness in which the soul learns to know God is a state in which we are wide awake and intent on hearing and receiving. I have known in a Quakers' Meeting in America a stillness which seemed on fire with God. It is strange that what is so precious and looks so easy should be so little practised.

I want to press on you all, dear comrades, the importance of this occasional stillness before God. Listen to Him. It is the business of the Holy Spirit to tell us if we are in any way *amiss*. Our spiritual life so easily wanes through the wiles of the world, the flesh, or the Devil. Many a fall would be prevented if, while it has only got as far as a slip, we were rescued by a habit of being quiet before God and listening to His voice.

### THE SACRAMENTS.

A law of God's is that every thoughtful person *who cares* has more or less to work out their own conclusions about different facts of religion. Authority has its place, but besides obedience to authority there should be *life*. Error is better than stagnation. Those who are seeking are not always agreed, but if they are honestly seeking they are converging towards the truth. I envy not men and women who receive all their doctrines second hand. In many cases a rude upsetting must be before them.

When we come to full age we have to ponder over such subjects as the Sacraments, the Incarnation, ever-

lasting punishment, the existence of evil, and to learn what is the view that is really and truly ours. Churches differ, parties in churches differ, the Bible *seems* to convey different impressions, Nature *almost* contradicts herself. And I thank God that it is so. How much of its vitality faith would lose if all were cut and dried and there was no possibility of difference of opinion. Knowledge is a slow attainment, and I often wonder that beginners, even when they keep changing their minds should ever suppose themselves to be absolutely correct at every fresh stage of conviction.

The subject of the Sacraments is one on which I love to think, and on which I ponder with comfort. For, happily, there can be no doubt as to what one's *practice* should be. Christ's commands are clear—to be baptised and to feed on bread and wine; but as to the *nature* of the Sacrament and the blessings to be received, opinions, even in our own church, differ considerably, and I hope most of us feel that we have still much to learn, and that we must not be too sure of our view being as yet the exact and *complete* truth.

I will tell you some of my own thoughts, but I do not wish you to adopt them because they are mine, but rather to think the matter over in God's sight with your Bible and Prayer Book before you, and to invoke the Spirit of God to inspire your judgment.

Water, air, bread, wine, oil—how beautiful are all these things—coming from God and pervaded by His Spirit and Presence. I think we should almost expect



that they would convey to us supernatural gifts. In chapters like the 3rd and the 6th of St. John's Gospel, it seems to me that honest readers must feel that baptism and the Lord's Supper are clearly in Christ's mind and yet that the meaning cannot be confined to the Sacraments, but has also a wider and more universal application in which the Sacraments are included.

I cannot believe, as the Quakers do, that what our Lord says about water, and bread, and wine, is only to be taken in a spiritual sense. I believe that when He said water He meant water, and I receive His words reverently and obediently, waiting for so much of the truth as it pleases Him to gradually make known. It seems clear that God uses water as the means for conveying spiritual regeneration or birth, and, as many holy Christians have died without ever receiving the rite of baptism, I suppose that Our Father in pitying love for mistakes of ignorance must have conveyed the water blessing to them on some other occasion than the ordained rite of baptism. In our Church we believe that in the case of *infants* the blessing is received unconsciously, and who can say that adults may not in some cases also receive it unconsciously?

What the water does convey who can tell? There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body, and sometimes I have wondered if it may not turn out that water contains and conveys to us the germ of that spiritual body which is to clothe our soul and spirit in Heaven. But I do not know, and we may safely

and happily leave it in God's Hands. This explanation would certainly meet many difficulties. Meanwhile, our part is to obey. It must be clear to all of us that at any rate it is GOD'S ordained way of making us members of His outward Church.

As to the other Sacrament, no one, I suppose, believes that Christ can *only* be received into the soul through the medium of Bread and Wine. St. Augustine declares that He is as truly received in the Epistle and Gospel as in the elements. The difficulty would be to say when He is *not* received. Yet all who love the Sacrament are convinced of its paramount importance, and I expect that most of us look on our Communion Services as the best times we have. We cannot expect too much from them, and we cannot measure the benefits they have brought to us.

May God guide us into all necessary truth as we are able to bear it.

THE BIBLE (the *Written* Word) REPRESENTS  
CHRIST (the *Incarnate* Word).

I think of all the good things which I have learned from Andrew Jukes, that none is more valuable to me than the following passage, in which he speaks of Christ and the Bible as showing each other's nature. The Book and the Man are alike. Both are called the "Word of God." And the difficulties in believing in them are much alike. It must have been hard to understand how the human body of Christ could reveal the eternal Word made flesh. And in the same way some people are staggered at the human written

Word—the Bible—revealing the Truth of God. Both are human, both are Divine. And each explains the other. Both are proved incorruptible and eternal.

Many of you will, I know, find the following extract worth careful study. I cannot say how much I owe to it:—

“How sacred was the body of Jesus Christ; Yet I suppose it obeyed the same laws as ours of accretion, and excretion, passing from and into other forms, and yet being the same body. It is a mystery, as the written Word is a mystery.

“We lean more heavily on some parts of the Bible than on others. Some parts we hesitate about and doubt and wonder how far they are wholly Divine. The same difficulties would perhaps have been felt about the body of Christ. Yet *all* was glorious, *all* was one day transfigured.

“The written Word is our Guide here, and in spirit it veils and yet reveals to us the things of heaven. In this it is like the Lord himself, Who coming in human form, veils and yet reveals the glory of the Eternal Son.

Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, seems to me, not an illustration only, but a proof, both of the preciousness of the letter, and of the deeper spirit which everywhere underlies the letter throughout the Word of God. He was man, but He was God. There was the human form of the Word, the outcome of David and Abraham. This was the humble form which men despised; but besides and under this was the Divine

Nature full of unspeakable depths of the wisdom of Almighty God ; giving forth draughts of that wisdom, emitting rays of that light, to as many as had capacity to receive His fulness ; and yet in mercy hiding from others depths which they were unfit to know ; He was like the world His hands have made, an ' open secret ' to all around Him.

"Such also is the Written Word, our Bible. Coming to us in human form, as the outcome of David and of other Israelites, and judged by most as Joseph's Son," it has a higher birth, truly human indeed, and yet no less divine ; in its letter, in its human form, coming down to teach men lessons of love and truth ; but in its spirit showing us the things within the veil, and lifting us up to live and walk and dwell above ; in the letter, even as the flesh of Christ, "never to see corruption," though rejected : and in spirit to be seen as shining with unearthly glory.

"I have known Christ after the flesh. I can never cease to adore the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the mystery of His Holy Incarnation, by which He has come as a man to speak to men. But I have also seen His glorious resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost.

"So have I known the Word in the letter. Most sweetly has it spoken to me. When I walked it led ; when I slept it kept ; when I awaked it talked with me. It has been my guide, my staff, my bread, my counsellor, my comfort, all through this pilgrimage. But I have also felt its spirit, and seen the depth

within the veil, where I could but fall down and cry, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.

“To brethern, therefore, who love the Word, who have seen cure upon cure wrought by it, but have not yet seen how its very form may be transfigured and shine with heavenly glory, I say—yet love and abide by the Word; it may be you shall not taste death, until you see this transfiguration, and if you see it not here on earth, you shall see it in heaven, where He who loves you is gone to prepare a dwelling. If we keep with Christ, daily walking by the Word (for of His disciples, all do not follow all His steps, and therefore see not His transfiguration) if we will not leave Him, no, not for a day, but will yet walk with Him—not by what this or the other man saith, but by the simple Word alone, living by it hour by hour—we may see it changed before us. Then the raiment of the letter shall be filled and beam with heavenly glory; the human form, which we have so long taken for a true prophet indeed, but only as the outcome of David, will show with unearthly glory that it is something far higher; and we shall see Moses and Elias, law and prophets, not in the flesh, but transfigured also, shining like Him of whom they bear witness; no longer a mere letter, much less a dead letter, but full of God, and radiant with His brightness. We must indeed come down again from thence; for though, as Peter says, “It is good for us” to be there, it is better for others that we descend to those who stay on lower ground. But they who have seen

the glory there, even if they come down from the mount at once to meet a devil, will not forget the glory or the shining raiment of Moses and Elias, or the voice from heaven, witnessing to Him, who, though He veiled Himself, was the Only Begotten Son of God.

"Others there are hoping in the Word, who may see their likeness in that blind man who sat beside the way near Jericho. Like him in darkness, nigh to that cursed and mystic city whose walls, once blown down by the blast of rams' horns, have been rebuilt to tempt some Israelites again to seek a dwelling there. And there they sit, both poor and blind, yet *by the way*. They have not rightly seen the Word either in the flesh or letter. They cry "Thou Son of David," little thinking that the Word that is so nigh them has glories greater than those of David's Son. And some disciples whose eyes are open to see the Son of God bid the blind to hold their peace because they give not the Son His due title.

"Not so the living Word. Such as seek Him shall be healed. They may not see His transfiguration, but with opened eyes they shall follow in the way.

"I would that all who teach the Word were thus climbing the holy mount, or having blind eyes opened by the way-side near Jericho. But there are, alas, many more who think they see, but who see the letter even as the Jews saw the flesh of Christ, and who neither love Him nor follow His ways. Yet they can sit, and judge, and justify to themselves their own

narrow views of the eternal Word. To them the Word is Joseph's child. They know exactly whence it is. They have never seen that human form transfigured, therefore 'it is impossible' for it to be transfigured. With such souls, all that is above them is imagination, all that is below them carnal formalism. What they see that is right. What they cannot see is, if not downright error, at least questionable. Such souls, instead of trying to understand what others speak, try rather to make others speak only what they themselves understand. Their ignorance measures all things. But they, too, shall see one day, when the veil is taken away and the Truth returns to judge all things.

"The question is one of fitness to receive the Word ; for He who is the TRUTH, because He knows all men, and knows what is in man, will not commit Himself to all men, because all are not prepared to receive Him. If He has told us earthly things, and we believe not ; how shall we believe if He tells us of heavenly things ? But, just as we can receive Him, so will He reveal Himself ; shewing Himself after the flesh to fleshly men ; in the glory of His resurrection only to the spiritual. But, whether He veils or unveils, all is love. If He unveils, it is that we, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image. If He veils Himself, it is because He knows that His brightness would destroy us ; therefore He tempers for us the glory through the cloudy veil. We cannot yet

bear the best things. He has many things to say which, for a season, His children cannot receive. Isaac, the seed of promise, has but milk till he is weaned; when he is weaned, a great feast is made in Abraham's house; and even so to this day there are things for weaned souls, which unweaned souls receive not, only because they cannot bear them."

I think I have read to myself quite twenty times this wonderful extract from the preface of Jukes's "Types of Genesis." Master it thoroughly, and it will be a blessing to you all your life long, as it is to me!

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I have a happy letter from Captain S——t, full of signs of spiritual life, and rejoicing in God's ordering for him. He says the "Story of stinginess" in "A Green Pasture," made him go to the expense of having his tunic lined before he gave it away to a Cadet. I love this sort of self-denying generosity. There is scarcely any quality so winning as generosity. Men forgive almost everything for its sake. An ugly character is never really generous. I praise God for all our officers who are gentlemen without being genteel.

We value greatly the loyal affection of some of our *ex-officers*, who are still working joyfully for us, getting us openings and candidates. God bless you all, dear brothers and sisters.

One of my troubles since I wrote last to you, has been that we have lost one of our Officers (of whom



we had hoped great things) because he repeatedly broke the rule of early rising. He is, I believe, a truly converted man, but no man who lies in bed till after 9 o'clock is any good to the Church Army. It is a kind of self-indulgence which neutralises the good a man does, for how can he expect to succeed in working for God when he gives way to a self-indulgence which would be fatal in any secular work? Please remember, dear brothers and sisters, the great importance of getting up early. Without it your prayer and Bible reading are sure to come to almost nothing. I want you all to get eight hours in bed, from 10 to 6, or from 10-30 till 6-30. In almost every case (except night rescue work) this is possible.

And now farewell and God bless you. Watch and pray. Love and work.

E.C.



*January, 1906.*

DEAR COMRADES,

God be with us and in us during this coming year. May it be a good and joyful year for each one of us, filled with blessings for our own use and for the use of others.

I can think of no better picture to send you than this one painted nearly 600 years ago by Giotto. How beautiful are the two heads reverently bowed in faith and adoration. I keep it opposite my bed, and I find it an uplifting reminder of the holy life to which we are called. And I believe you will get to love it as I do. I spend part of my new year's eve in bringing your names one by one before GOD with special prayers and thanksgivings.

For our lesson we will take the gospel from Isaiah, which has as true a place in our hearts as the gospel of the four Evangelists. The book of Isaiah has probably two authors. The first thirty-nine chapters are by the great prophet who was (it is said) a cousin of King Hezekiah, and who lived at Jerusalem. The last twenty-six chapters are (it would appear) by an even greater man (possibly also called Isaiah) who lived about a hundred years later, at the time of the Babylonian captivity, and when King Cyrus was reigning in Persia. If you read the book carefully you will have no doubt as to its double authorship.

Nowhere are there more soul saving declarations of Divine Salvation than in this glorious book. The happiness of being trusted to declare such a message, must have largely outweighed the sadness which was caused Isaiah by the blindness and dulness of those to whom he preached. They rejected him, and it is said that at last they martyred him in the reign of Manasseh. But he wrote not only for them, but for the millions who have read and rejoiced in his words during the thousands of years which followed his death. His message is of the forgiveness of sins, and of salvation by Christ, given to us by that unalterable love of God, which was to triumph through all evil, and disappointments and backsliding.

Surely there never was such a book of "ups and downs." Its spring and elasticity are marvellous, and all its "fresh springs are in God." Not once only, not even a dozen times only, does Isaiah rise<sup>e</sup> from dejection and despair, to the most jubilant song of triumph. The threatenings and judgments seem as severe as they could be, yet as soon as they are uttered, almost in the same breath, they are turned to pity and love, and promises. May the same spirit be in us.

What a bold, incautious book it is! Its light blazes on the very darkest places and brings hope and confidence where there was nothing but shame and misery. Sins that are scarlet are to be as white as wool. Crimson trespasses are to become like snow. Nothing is too good for those who had just been abased to the lowest depths, if only they will turn and repent. In

these pages appears more distinctly than ever before the figure of our Lord. The Virgin will conceive. The Child will be born. And the increase of His government is to have no end. Death is to be swallowed up in victory. The Resurrection is clearly promised, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise."

Much of the book is taken up with laments and warnings, but there is a tenderness all through which is most re-assuring. The blind eyes are to be opened, and the way of holiness is to be clear.

The scene is laid at Jerusalem, and it seems almost a wonder that with the coming captivity so near, there should still be such joy and triumph. But God is timeless, and Isaiah's vision of peace was for eternity.

In the latter part of the book, beginning with the 40th chapter, the scene is changed. The days of Hezekiah and even of Manasseh are passed, and Israel is in captivity at Babylon. The "Voice" sounds in the wilderness, full of grace. God will feed His flock like a shepherd. The bruised reed shall not be broken. He is a GOD of infinite power, and also of infinite love and kindness.

Then comes the wonderful declaration that King Cyrus is to be His Anointed one, and is to accomplish a great national salvation for the Jews. They were to return to Jerusalem. GOD Himself would bring about their salvation. He loved them with an everlasting love, He had created them for His glory, He had blotted out their sins, He was their Redeemer. Ezra tells us how the prophecy was fulfilled.

Much of the book is taken up with the judgment of Babylon. It came to pass at the end of Belshazzar's reign, when the Persians rushed in and destroyed the city. It reminds us of the similar prophecy in Revelation.

About the 50th chapter the tumult of the book begins to clarify, and then again appears the vision of Christ, so clear, so vivid, so exquisite, that nothing lovelier can be said of Him even now when we have the full story of His life, death, and resurrection. Who does not treasure the 53rd of Isaiah as one of the most precious things in the world? Everyone who thirsts is to be satisfied. The redeemed are to "Arise and shine." Then we are shown CHRIST as He was in Galilee, anointed to preach the gospel of love to the meek, the broken hearted, and the captives.

But I want us to go back to the early part of the book and to study the sixth chapter.

This is one of the most interesting chapters in the Bible. It is also difficult, and that increases its attraction, and its value. For difficulties of any kind, when they have been faced and overcome, are gains.

The chapter is full of mystery, and yet most convincing. Its inspiration is manifest and is of a high order. We read here the story of the young Isaiah's consecration. Perhaps it was his conversion. We hear of his sight of the Lord of Hosts, of his call with its heavy trials, and of the final triumph of his message. Every one of the thirteen verses in the chapter is worth careful study.

The call took place during the year that the great King Uzziah died. He had reigned 52 years (till he was nearly 70). It had been a season of marked national prosperity, and of wise government, but Uzziah had been a leper for years, and had lived in the house of lepers, and was buried as an outcast.

Isaiah was (or perhaps he seemed in his vision to be) in the court of the temple at Jerusalem. His vision was doubtless of CHRIST (for "no man has seen God at any time" in His essence). God is known to us in His manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Many times has there been a sight of Him manifested in CHRIST, and the sight is generally very much the same. As He was seen by Isaiah in the courts of the temple at Jerusalem, so he was seen by Daniel at Babylon, on the banks of the Tigris, and by Ezekiel near the river Chebar. Also by St. John, imprisoned in P'atmos. The Lord appeared to them white robed and shining, and full of power and beauty. Full also of care for men and of salvation.

All real prophets have learnt to *listen* as well as to speak, and this is very important for us to remember. "How dear are Thy *counsels* unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them," says the Psalmist. Some people get quite out of the habit of listening either to GOD or man. I have friends who never listen to what I say, but who talk the whole time we are together. I do not think this means that they get nothing from an interview, for we speak to our friends quite differently, and our talk is unconsciously given according

to our knowledge of what they are, and gathers strength and character accordingly.

But still it is a loss not to know what friends would actually say, and of course this is infinitely truer of speech between GOD and man.

Isaiah and all the prophets spoke and listened also.

I must copy for you Dean Stanley's description of this first vision of Isaiah. "He stood at the gate of the porch of the Temple, and he gazed straight into the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies itself. All the intervening obstacles were removed. The great gates of cedar wood were thrown open, the many coloured veil that hung before the innermost sanctuary was drawn aside, and deep within was a throne as of a king, high and lifted up, towering as if into the sky.

"What was the form that sat thereon, here, as elsewhere, the Scripture forbears to describe. Only by outward and inferior images could the Divine Essence be expressed.

"The long drapery of His train filled the Temple, as 'His glory fills the earth.' Around the throne, as the cherubs on each side of the mercy seat, as the guards round the King, with head and feet veiled, figures floated like flying serpents, themselves glowing with the glory of which they were part, whilst vast wings enfolded their faces and their feet, and supported them in mid-air round the throne. From side to side went up a hymn of praise, which has since been incorporated in the worship of Christendom (in our 'Te



Deum'), and which expressed that He was there who bore the great Name by which GOD was specially known in the period of the Jewish monarchy and in the Prophetic order 'The Lord of Hosts.' The sound ran like thunder to the extremity of the Temple. The pillars of the gateway trembled, as if in an earthquake shock, and the whole building within grew dark as with the smoke of a vast sacrifice. It was a sight and sound that the youthful Isaiah recognised at once as the intimation of Divinity. It was the revelation of the Divine Presence to him, as that of the Burning Bush to Moses, or of the still small Voice to Elijah, the inevitable prelude to a Prophetic mission, couched in the form most congenial to his character and situation. To him, the royal prophet of Jerusalem, this manifestation of royal splendour was the almost necessary vesture in which the spiritual Truth was to be clothed. All his own sins (we know not what they were), and the sins of his nation, as we know them from himself and the contemporary prophets, passed before him, and he said, 'Woe is me, for I am lost, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.'"

The immediate effects of the vision was to make Isaiah deeply conscious of his sinfulness and especially of his besetting sin. The light of God fell on his heart and life, and he confessed and repented of his fault.

The sin of unclean lips, of foul language, of careless

oaths, and of sensual talk is a sin that besets men still. And in many cases it is hard to conquer. Men of high and brave character have often been defiled by it. Probably it may not be your sin or my sin. Perhaps we may feel that it is *less* heinous than the sins which most easily beset *us*. It is well to magnify our own faults rather than to be extra hard on the sins to which we are not tempted. It is a cheap thing to abuse temper and lying and drunkenness and other vices to which we are not liable while we ourselves are perhaps guilty of unkindness, and coldness, and pride, or of evil thoughts.

*How good are the good?*

This is a difficult question to answer. We are struck sometimes with the severity of the warnings and admonitions of preachers, and also with the depth and reality of their confessions of their own sins. (David, Newman, Dr. Vaughan, St. Paul, Rutherford, occur to me). On the other hand in some biographies of good people there is a noticeable absence of these confessions. In George Muller's diary I remember no confessions of guilt but a strong declaration of uprightness. He was a good man and greatly honoured by God. Again, Brother Lawrence seems in his account to be always both innocent and holy. "The best men have generally been those who have accused themselves most sadly of deep and sad evil," said one of the holiest men I ever knew, in answer to a question of mine a few days ago. Probably we are not intended to know the whole truth, and the seventh of Romans will always be a puzzle.

The perfectionist school declare themselves to be practically sinless, but their assertions are not always convincing. Flaws invisible to themselves are often only too apparent to their friends and acquaintances. Perhaps a happy temporary deliverance from some besetting evil has produced a sense of sinlessness, and when the old enemy has come back it has been hard to withdraw this testimony and to humble themselves by confession. Yes, the question, "How good are the good?" is a difficult question to answer.

But how willing to forgive and to cleanse is our LORD. Immediately on his confession to Him Isaiah was forgiven, and his lips touched with the live coal. And the words were spoken, "Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged."

Where lay the virtue of the fiery coal? It makes me think of CHRIST'S words, "Every sacrifice shall be salted with fire." If fire means trouble, and trial, and sorrow, then we should welcome it as a messenger from God when it visits us. "Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken to you," were the LORD'S words to His disciples, and they might have been addressed to Isaiah. Now he is fit to respond to the LORD'S appeal. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

"Here am I," he replied, "send me."

GOD wants willingness, not compulsion, in His servants, and especially in His Evangelists.

And how comes the difficult part of this Sixth

Chapter. Isaiah is sent to his people with a message which he is warned will not be received. The people are earthbound, spiritually deaf, and spiritually blind. The seed will fall on a bad soil, and he is warned and braced for his disappointment. Again and again this sad fact comes out in the book of Isaiah.

Why must the people be preached to if the preaching will be unavailing? Will it not increase their guilt? Is this the GOD Who is Almighty Love? The question which Isaiah asks shows that he divines the truth. He asks, "Lord, *how long?*"

His question is answered, and he is told that the seed will *not* be lost, but that the blessing will be long delayed. Victory will come, that victory which St. Paul rejoiced in when he concluded the unhappy 9th, 10th, an 11th of Romans, with the glorious climax that at last "all Israel shall be saved."

You will find just the same note of wasted and delayed salvation many times in the prophecy of Isaiah (see for instance chapter 28).

We must expect obscurities in prophecies. The prophets probably told us as clearly as they could what they saw. But they often—as it were—"saw through a glass darkly." We do not know exactly what St. Paul meant by this expression of his. Magicians were said to see future events in mirrors or in crystal globes, but to see them often imperfectly and doubtfully. Perhaps St. Paul had this idea in his mind. Many prophetic chapters seem as if the writer were peering into half darkness and only able to give a dim description of what he saw.

Take for instance the interesting 18th chapter of Isaiah. Some people think it is a vision of England, seen through many coming centuries.

The "land shadowing with wings" beyond Ethiopia sending ambassadors by the sea to a nation "tall and smooth," terrible from their beginning, a nation that "meteth out and treadeth down,"—it certainly looks like the British power in Africa. Read it in the new version which is specially valuable for the prophets. Ethiopia was immediately south of Egypt. There was no sea there, so the fact of ambassadors coming by sea must have been puzzling in those days. Wings no doubt mean heavenly attributes, and our naval power, our aggressive colonization, and our appearance (tall and shaven), all fit with Isaiah's words. One would like to think that the prophet had perception of Great Britain, even if it was a dim and doubtful perception. It is beautiful to note how eager GOD'S messenger's have been to tell (for the world's good) all that they possibly *could* tell.

I only instance this in passing as an instance of many mysterious prophecies, where a kind of compulsion was on the seer to tell all he *could*.

Some people try to keep themselves and their knowledge to themselves, and are apt rather to pride themselves on their reserve. It is a quality which makes a fine show, but I think we are getting nowadays to feel that it is better to be unreserved, and to give as freely as we can of ourselves and of what we possess. I have many

reserved friends whom I value greatly, but I think that they would be better still and more valuable if they were unreserved and gave of their best to whoever would receive it. My own belief is that people who call themselves reserved have *sometimes* very little to reserve. They do not show their feelings, but is it not sometimes because their feelings are attenuated and dwindling? This is not always the case, I know. But if Isaiah, and Shakespeare, and Michael Angelo, and Dante, and Milton, and Tennyson, had not been unreserved and told us of their loves and errors, and hopes and regrets, how much poorer we should have been. How unreserved David and St. Paul are, and what gainers we are by their openness. David hides nothing from us of his sins and repentances and unfulfilled hopes. Perhaps St. Paul may sometimes be almost too open in his personal reproaches to his friends and converts. But how beautiful is the effect! What a great loving heart he displays! The power of letting the heart go out with great goodwill and Christlike purity to those whom we come across in life's journey, is one of the best qualities that can be possessed. After all it is pride as much as shyness that makes people stand aloof from each other. I declare that many of the best gifts in life have come to me from people that I had an impulse to neglect. It seems to be a law of GOD'S that such people should be able to help us. I get the following beautiful quotation from Captain Naylor.

"Hush, I pray you!  
What if this stranger should  
Happen to be—God!"

Who can say how often the Divine becomes visible in the human! How often does the same moral come out in nursery tales of ugly repelling people who turn out to be disguised princes or even Divine and saintly visitants. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

We may miss great treasures, earthly or heavenly, by unkindly or carelessly neglecting a tiresome bore, or a vexatious person. Let us in this connection think of CHRIST. Can anything be more opposite to His way than coldly to keep ourselves or our gifts back from people who are looked down on or disliked. Think of Matthew and Zaccheus the publicans, of the disgraceful chattering woman of Samaria, of the outcast Syro-Phœnician, of the dreadful lepers, and the Demoniacs. Was He not continually letting His wonderful virtue and love go out to them for healing and blessing? What secret did He ever keep back from any one who was able and willing to receive? His unreserve was like that of the sun itself. We find that nearly all the people who have great souls give freely after this fashion.

I think I have said enough now to make you eager to study this wonderful and inexhaustible book of Isaiah. What you discover in it by GOD'S Holy Spirit will be more valuable to you than what you get second hand through me.

E.C.

May, 1906.

DEAR COMRADES,

It is very good to be writing to you again after a somewhat severe illness—an illness which was full of blessings. In my life I have had scarcely my share of pain and sorrow, and I can, from the bottom of my heart, thank GOD for what *has* been sent to me. It is well to come sometimes to the brink of “the river of death,” and to taste its waters.

But the times of illness and dying are not the times for preparing the soul for its departure. Nearly always illness brings with it a sort of torpor, from which it is difficult or impossible to rouse ourselves. Often we cannot *think* with our full power while we are ill. The *business* of being ill—the various symptoms, the medicines, the remedies, and the nursings occupy nearly all the attention. No, it is when we are strong and well, and have our full powers that the needs and state of the soul must be considered and settled. How many leave this consideration till they have neither the will nor the power to deal with it, and sink unprepared to the grave—to wake up, *How?*

Let each of us bravely and carefully face, with earnest prayer, the matter of our soul's health while we are well and strong, so as to be ready for danger, for illness, or for death itself.

I write this as much for the young as for those who are getting oldish. Most of you have youth and life



before you, and we older ones rejoice for you in these good gifts. You can do many things better than we can do them ; and we like, above all things, to *help* you to do them as well as they can possibly be done. For we have learnt by experience certain things which save much trouble and perplexity to all who will benefit by advice. So write to any of us in confidence whenever you feel inclined.

For our Bible lesson to day, let us consider what is the due equipment of GOD'S soldiers—whether men or women.



Let us study afresh the 6th chapter of Ephesians.

The first requisite for GOD'S soldier—*let it always be remembered*—is *Truth*. The loins are to be girt and braced up with Truth. There is no safety or comfort otherwise. Deceit is like quicksands.

"I am the 'Truth,'" said CHRIST. And His servants and followers must be Truth also.

The greatest men of the world have been a brotherhood of Truth, and yet it is a virtue which, though it is so precious, is often held cheap and neglected, and sometimes it is utterly rejected and despised.

The old fable is that Truth first came unclothed out of a well, with nothing to give the world but a true mirror. And that no one would have anything to do with her, or would consent to see themselves as they really were in her mirror. And still to-day the love of truth at all costs is seldom practised, and those who are faithful to her are apt to be counted inconvenient friends, or even renegades and heretics. In business and in pleasure Truth is still set at nought.

Even religious people have often been disloyal to Truth, and have regarded her as almost an enemy. They have avoided or ignored her because they felt her to be a danger instead of a safeguard. But the man who is faithful to GOD is faithful also to Truth, for GOD is Truth, and no lie, however convenient, is allowed to His servant. And, sooner or later, all who are faithful to Truth are crowned with peace, and joy, and Divine beauty.

Thank GOD if you are one of those who are born lovers of Truth—ready to follow her at all costs, through honour and dishonour. Not every one is born thus.

Most people love other things better than they love Truth. Sometimes they prefer authority. It is a reproach against religion (and it has too much justice in it) that every discovery of science has had the same reception from too "orthodox" people. First, they declare that it is a lie. Second, that it is contrary to the Bible. Third, that it is *quite true, and that the Bible teaches it!* When Galileo discovered that the world moved, he was condemned by the Pope and tortured for declaring the truth, because it could not be made to fit with the teaching of the Roman Church, which decided that it was justifiable in order to gain "a good end" to set Truth on one side, and to take expediency and authority as guides instead. But it was crying "Peace, Peace," when there was no peace. And now every one is obliged to admit that Galileo was right, and the Roman Church wrong. To this day the trick at Naples of "liquifying the blood of St. Januarius" is annually endorsed by the authorities. "If the blood did not liquify there would be a riot," they say. So the "miracle" must be somehow managed. Probably, no educated persons believes that such a miracle takes place, but it is "wise" not to deny it. In the same way, once a year, a similar trick is countenanced at Jerusalem. The "Sacred Fire" has to descend on a certain day in the Church

of the Holy Sepulchre, or the people would make a tumult. So it is arranged accordingly. But, alas! we need not go to other nations to prove disloyalty to Truth—in business, in pleasure, and also in religion. Real delicate truthfulness is rare. It is a precious virtue. It has often the blessed and inspiring effect of wit. Its lover feels like a war-horse going to the battle, and is full of holy triumph when he speaks the truth against odds.

“He keeps the ranks of battle,  
He means the thing he says.”

Probably the truthful man is the first to be accused of untruthfulness by his enemies. Take, as an example, the historian Froude. He was constantly accused by his opponents of being habitually untruthful. But, as a matter of fact, he had a real passion for Truth, and suffered severely for it. It is, of course, impossible for a historian never to make a mistake; but I am not aware of any deviation of Anthony Froude's from truth, except that he went too far in his eager justification of King Henry the Eighth. The King had been aspersed unjustly and violently, and in defending him Froude went a little too far, as probably we have all done sometimes in defending ourselves, or our friends. One must not be hard on those who have unconsciously deviated a little, for it is difficult to be quite accurate always, and especially if, as we grow older, we have to re-adjust our views, and own that we were wrong. But there is always a heavy penalty to pay for *wilful* untruthfulness, and often the offender does not realize

that his punishment means the lowered opinion of just people. I have two friends, who neither of them knows that I have lost the power of thinking as well of them as I used to do. One is a preacher, the other is a lady. It happened thus. There is a certain religious doctrine which experience proves can be either believed or denied by good and excellent people. In the Church Army it is clearly understood that it is one of the doctrines in which we may differ, as we belong to a non-party Society. We may either hold it or not, but we are forbidden to discuss it controversially. It is the doctrine that all who die unconverted will be endlessly tormented by fire and by worms. I had reason to believe that neither the preacher nor the lady believed this doctrine, but an important appointment in her case, and a reputation for orthodoxy in his case, tempted them to pretend that they did believe it. The lady got the appointment, and the preacher was understood to be orthodox. They prospered; but their influence with all who knew the facts ceased. It was not that anyone blamed them for their beliefs, but only that they were not true about their beliefs.

Of course, I do not mean that anyone is obliged to say what they believe about everything, but that they must not *pretend*. "I am the Truth," said CHRIST, and "whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil," says Wisdom.

Read (if you can get it) Lord Bacon's Essay on "Truth." It is only about two pages long, but I think it is the finest Essay that was ever penned.

Do not let us, however, pride ourselves on being truthful if we are only blunt and rude. Some people do this, and turn out dreadful failures all round. What we want is to be delicately truthful, and also delicately kind. To give unnecessary pain is a *bad* fault. Careful diplomacy may accompany the most rigid truthfulness. GOD'S grace is necessary to make us shine in both qualities.

We all know some people who are to be depended on for always telling us the *real truth*. What a comfort and stay they are! Others, again, are so steeped in duplicity, that it seems as if they had lost all power of ever being truthful; just as a stick held in water *cannot* look straight. If we want the truth from such people we never get it from what they say, but in some other way; and that is very sad to experience.

Very near to truth come the next two virtues mentioned in our chapter: righteousness and peace. Neither of them can thrive without it.

Righteousness is the breastplate. Boldly the fighting man can face his foe if his breastplate is sound. But how fearful and hesitating is the fight of the Christian who knows there is something wrong in his life—a hidden canker.

Again and again I have known a life poisoned in this way; and often the offender has tried to keep up a good show before the world, and has deceived, for a time, even his fellow-workers. Evil company, or drink, or money matters have generally been the sad

cause of a cracked breastplate. But there are other faults which can damage it. Envy and jealousy are specially to be feared.

True soldiers of CHRIST are the first to accuse themselves of faults, and I believe that most of our deepest repentance takes place after our conversion, and not before it. We learn self-examination as we get older.

Let no one persuade us that the Christian need not be thoroughly righteous, good, and holy. A religion which does not make people good is worthless. *We must be good*, and people must see that we are good. I do not mean that we must be faultless. And our plea for *salvation* is not that we are good, but that we are forgiven for CHRIST'S sake, and that He, Who bore our sins, gives us His righteousness. But none the less is the work of sanctification *essential*. None "without holiness shall see the LORD."

Perhaps we, some of us, look with envy at happy people who seem almost immune from the dangers and faults which threaten others. There *are* men and women who appear to be naturally so innocent and simple that serious evil scarcely touches them; while others have nerves which vibrate to every temptation.

I cannot explain why life is made so much harder for some people than for others. But there are *compensations*. A lily that has risen out of the mire has a higher beauty than the buttercups and dandelions, which have grown up in good and wholesome soil. A pearl is the final result of the oyster's disease, and

the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are twelve pearls.

Innocence is good, but victory is better.

All GOD'S musical instruments are needed for His praise; but the monotonous clash of the cymbal, and the thin melody of the flute cannot be compared to the many voices of the organ with its elaborate and diverse stops and pipes, and all its subtle harmonies and discords. The organ is like a great experienced saint who knows the depths of sorrow and temptation. The cymbals and flutes are like simple children. We love them for their innocence, and sometimes their very ignorance helps and cheers us. In the sorrow of bereavement a child is apt to be the very best of comforters. But we would not always remain children. It is better when the time comes to be full-grown men and women, even though it means a measure of sorrow and hardship and suffering.

This seems a long digression from the breast-plate of righteousness, but it has to do with the subject, and some of you will, I know, be helped by it.

We must next speak of the preparation of the Gospel of peace, with which the feet are to be shod, though I need scarcely write to you about this part of your armour, I think. For we all love this "Gospel of peace," and we live our lives by it, and we continually want it for ourselves and for others. Indeed, we cannot manage for one hour without it. If we let it go our feet are naked and soiled and wounded. Its necessity comes before even the breastplate of righteousness.



“Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.”

Are we all increasingly full of the delight and the love of the Gospel? Do we get deeper and steadier and happier views of it as we get older? I do, and I believe you do also. GOD bless us in our receiving and our giving the Gospel of peace.

But I do believe that there are some real true children of GOD who live in twilight as to what the Gospel of peace is. They are half afraid of it. It seems too simple, or too good, or not enough “on Church lines.” What a delusion! As if anything could be too simple or too good for GOD to provide for His offspring!

If I am writing to anyone of this kind, I would say “Study your Bible and your Prayer Book on this subject before you attend to anything else.” For its place is the *first* place. If you have been led to hold any erroneous views about Holy Baptism, or the Blessed Eucharist, or about Absolution, or any other things which neutralize the Gospel of faith, repentance and forgiveness for CHRIST’S sake, then you may be sure that you have made a mistake, and must retrace your steps and learn the true place of these blessed gifts of GOD. Hold them fast, but in their right places.

Let us next consider the shield of faith.

I cannot think how people can live without it. If it were not for its safeguard I believe I should now be walking in the depths of hell.

It is the shield of faith to which our victory is due, and with this shield we must set out each day for our conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil. It means trust and faith in the LORD and His promises—a thorough practical belief in GOD as our SAVIOUR.

As I get older, I see more and more what a shield and safeguard religion is. It is *essential* to bring our difficulties and dangers and faults to GOD each day. To listen for His Word and to hear it is worth millions. To be without it is to be rudderless, and to perish in the storms of life. To live in communion with Him means to be forgiven, cleansed, delivered and guided. What a Friend He is! What a priceless benefit it is to be in touch with Him and to obey His commands! Well is CHRIST called the *Light*. May He shine on every dark and twilight place in our lives.

Our difficulties are not only with what we *know* to be wrong. Hard, indeed, is the fight sometimes with *known evil*. The victory is difficult to win (if it *is* won), and defeat is difficult to survive and recover from. But sometimes legions of difficulties assault us when (by our fault or otherwise) we can scarcely tell what *is* wrong, and what *is* right. We dread being misled by our inclinations. We may be led astray by what are almost virtues. Even our kindness and unsuspiciousness may get us into trouble. How much, then, we need the eternal, infinite, and ever-present GOD for our friend and counsellor. How often we look back and say, "My foot had well nigh

slipped, but Thy mercy held me up." Sometimes we travel, like Christian, in the valley of the shadow of death, with the ditch on one side and the quag on the other, beset, as he was, by the devil's whispers which he thought came from within and were his own thoughts. Read the passage in that dear old book, "The Pilgrim's Progress."

Thank GOD this is not always, or even *generally*, our experience. More frequently He leads us in green pastures, by still waters, and oftener still in safe but ordinary checkered paths.

But the powers of evil are around us and within us, and we all have to find it out sooner or later. Let us be innocent and ignorant of evil *as long as we can*, and when that is impossible let us be as ignorant of it *as we can*.

My space is filled up, and I cannot (as I had meant) write to you to-day about the helmet of Salvation, and about "praying always." GOD bless you, and teach you better than any man can teach you.

E.C.

July, 1906.

DEAR COMRADES,

One of the *not easy* subjects, concerning which, thank God, our convictions get clearer and wider and deeper as we grow older, is

### THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

It is a matter on which I daresay many of you ponder rather anxiously. For it is of great importance, and you may reasonably be afraid of making up your mind too quickly about it. Many people almost fear to face the difficulties. But it is better to face them bravely, reverently, and prayerfully, when the time comes. For if we elude a subject from the dread of making mistakes about it, then our convictions always want steadiness and strength.

A Christian must always be so certain that true religion can never clash with truth that he need not fear to give truth the first place. *CHRIST is the Truth.* Our danger comes in being carelessly or insufficiently equipped for the conflict. Many a one has rushed into argument with unbelievers, ignorant of facts, and not grounded in the faith, and then of course it is only too probable that disaster will follow. Unbelievers are often very bold and positive, and their swagger sometimes frightens a faithful soul who has not specially studied the points at issue.

Some years ago I remember how staggered I myself

was by hearing it said, "Of course nowadays everybody knows that the Gospel of St. John *could* not have been written till three or four hundred years after CHRIST died. This is absolutely proved in several ways. It's language is of a comparatively late date. Every one who has studied the matter even slightly *knows that much.*"

This was the talk of the critics in the current magazines twenty-five years ago. But now it has disappeared like a bubble, and it has to be admitted that the book was probably dictated to his disciples at Ephesus by St. John himself towards the end of his life. I know enough now not to be upset by any such tall talk. The Bible feeds me day by day, and proves its Divine origin by its Divine power.

Do you know the following words of that great man, President Lincoln, of America? "In regard to the great Book I have only to say, it is the *best* gift which GOD has ever given man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this book. From it we learn to know right from wrong. All things desirable to man are contained in it."

Some good people have gone to a foolish opposite extreme on this subject, and out of an intended respect for the Bible have invented claims for it which the book itself never makes, and which may be called almost nonsensical. Let us neither go beyond GOD'S truth, or come short of it. A dear old friend of ours (the schoolmistress long ago of my sisters) used to

affirm that the fossil bones of animals (which science has proved lived thousands and thousands of years ago) were created by GOD *as bones* on purpose to try our faith. This was of course such a foolish theory, and so unjust to the character of GOD, that it threw reasonable listeners on to the side which was opposite to the schoolmistress. Many sceptics have doubtless been made by this sort of well-intentioned but regrettable behaviour.

It reminds me of the following story related by Mr. Andrew Jukes :—

“ The boys in one of the classes of a Sunday school were reading the chapter which records how David, as he walked on the roof of his house, saw Bathsheba. One of the boys, looking up through the schoolroom window at the steep roofs of the houses opposite, after a pause said, ‘ But, teacher, how could David walk on the roof of his house ? ’ The teacher, on this point as ignorant as his scholar, at once checked all enquiry by saying, ‘ Don’t grumble at the Bible, boy.’ Meanwhile the teacher of an adjoining class had overheard the conversation. Leaning over to his fellow-teacher he whispered, ‘ The answer to the difficulty is, with men it is impossible, but not with GOD, for with GOD all things are possible.’ Such was the solution of ‘ the difficulty ’; too true a sample of the way in which honest doubts are often met, as though all enquiry into what is perplexing in Scripture must be criminal ; and also of the absurdities which are confidently put forth as true expositions of GOD’S mind and word.”

Of course, one understands and even respects the desire to believe that every word of the Bible is not only true in the *deepest* sense, but true also in the *literal* sense. But a time comes when we learn that truth is sometimes taught by a parable or a poem, and not by a mere relation of facts. CHRIST'S stories of the ten virgins, of the marriage feast, and of the talent in the napkin are not to be taken as historical facts, for any one can see that they did not actually happen, but that they were intended to teach certain important truths by such a method that they cannot be forgotten.

In the same way we receive the accounts of the creation of the world as the best form in which men could at first be taught the truth. Later on we learn that with GOD a thousand years are as one day, and that by-and-bye time itself "shall be no more," but shall pass into infinity, and that then GOD shall be All in all. But this later truth includes and does not invalidate the accounts given us in the first and the third chapters of Genesis. Much of the Bible is seen in a new and much more helpful light when we understand something of its mystic sense, and learn to look for a deeper truth than that which lies on the surface.

For myself I believe that every word in the Bible is written according to the will of GOD. If we want proof of this let us remember CHRIST'S continual appeal to the Scriptures, and His saying that man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of GOD.

Some one will probably wish to ask, "Must we believe that all parts of the Bible are equally inspired?"

To this my answer is that quite different *degrees* of inspiration are *required* for different parts. A steam engine is not employed to drag about a perambulator. A great orator does not put forth his full power to tell you what o'clock it is. And in like manner the afflatus of the HOLY GHOST is not needed for a narrative like the Book of Esther in the same degree that it is needed for such passages as the Messianic Psalms or the prophecies in the Book of Isaiah. In such matters we must use our common sense.

It is also very important to remember that just as CHRIST the Word Incarnate had truly His Divine and human nature, so also the written Word has its Divine and human nature, and that the latter may sometimes obscure the former to some extent. The human medium is very apparent in the account given of some of the words used by Moses with GOD, and in some of the imprecatory Psalms, which are given us as *records* and not as *models*. We are not to suppose that we should be right to feel and speak as Moses and David sometimes spoke, any more than that the disciples were to call down fire from heaven to destroy villages because Elijah had once done so. Much that was excusable in the youth of the world would be wrong in its maturity just as a child's act of ignorant cruelty to an insect would be detestable in a grown-up person who knew what he was about.

The Bible would lose much of its interest and its value if its lessons were *not* conveyed through an inspired human medium. The writers told us what they



saw and knew *as clearly as they could*, but sometimes it was "seeing through a glass darkly," just as you may look at a landscape through a crystal ball, or may see clear water through a coloured and flawed bottle. It is an imperfect sight that is given. Sometimes—but not always—the light is dazzlingly clear and pure, as in the song of the Virgin Mary, and in the 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, the first of Colossians, and the eighth of Romans. In these and in many other passages the writer seems to have been translated into heaven itself, and to have been filled with such an afflatus of the HOLY GHOST that he could speak of things almost unspeakable. But it was a very different matter when he came to speak of such a matter as the re-marriage of widows. Then he actually tells us that he was only giving his own private opinion. So that widows can marry again as often as they wish without transgressing any commandment of GOD or man, unless, of course, there are other good reasons against it. Always give the Bible *all it claims*, but do not invent further claims with the desire to honour it, or you may get yourself and your subject into difficulties.

The inspiration and Divine authority of the New Testament were apparently not realised when the books were first written, but gradually learnt and at last fully recognized. If you read St. Luke's preface you will observe how simply and humbly he speaks of what he was going to do, not knowing apparently that in him CHRIST'S promise was going to be

fulfilled, and that the HOLY GHOST would put forth His Divine miraculous power and guide his pen.

St. Luke only said that as many others had taken in hand to tell the story, so also it had seemed good to tell Theophilus what had happened.

I daresay he little guessed that what he was going to write would be valued by us as much as the prophecies of Isaiah and the Psalms of David.

I have been lately reading an interesting little book by the Dean (Robinson) of Westminster on the making of the four Gospels, and it has made clear to me many interesting things. He thinks that evidently the writers of St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels (which, by the way, never say that they were written by Matthew or Luke) had before them two manuscripts from which they both copied large pieces word for word.

One of them was St. Mark's Gospel, which was evidently written *first* (probably by St. Mark from St. Peter's dictation). This priceless, splendid, vigorous natural account was only preserved to us by one manuscript, all the others having perished.

The other manuscript was evidently of the same description, and contained much matter which they both made use of (among others the beautiful account of the healing of the Centurion's servant, which is *not* told by St. Mark).

Besides these two, they had other sources of information and inspiration, notably the priceless account of our LORD'S birth in the earlier chapters of St.

Luke. It seems natural to believe that this came straight from CHRIST'S mother herself.

I firmly believe that many parts of the four Gospels were composed miraculously by the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST coming upon the writers, and causing them to know and remember what had happened and what had been said. This must, I think, be true of nearly all the Gospel of St. John and of the Sermon on the Mount, and of many parts which could only have been accurately remembered by a special gift of GOD.

And now I want to call your attention to the pleasant consideration of "How much we owe to PEOPLE AND BOOKS."

Our souls get unconsciously fed by them, and grow into the likeness and fashion of what we admire and love. This is why we have printed Capt. Naylor's excellent little treatise on "Books that have helped," quoting the letters of recommendation that you have sent to me and to him. I hope all our Officers will buy the book. We are selling it for sixpence, so that all may be able to get it. I have mentioned in it a few books that have helped me, but I wish I could also pass on to you the benefits I owe to *my friends*. For friends of the right sort are even more important than books, and every one who goes the right way about it can have friends.

I will tell you a little about some of those who have blessed me and helped to make my life better than it would otherwise have been.

We are told that the "memory of the just is blessed."

I only saw General (Chinese) Gordon three times, but he made a lasting impression on me from his extraordinary humility and simplicity. He must have been a great surprise to everyone I think. His life, as you probably know, was one of such force and practical power, that the heathen people among whom he worked believed that he was a kind of wizard, and that the little cane he carried in his hand was an enchanter's wand. His career looked miraculous, and I doubt not that it was a life of real inspiration. He saw and dashed at his object, and pursued it till he won the victory with such startling success, that it was no wonder that he was reckoned to be more than human. He seemed in a moment to know what was the right thing to do, and careless of his life and of everything but right and wrong, he fought evil and conquered.

Before I saw him I expected to find a stern, fierce, alarming hero, silent and scornful. Instead of this he was a gentle-mannered, humble, blue-eyed man, who seemed to think himself of absolutely no importance, and whose interest seemed concentrated on the study of the Bible and its mystic truths. "I should like to go and live simply at the East End of London, and to do what I could for the people," he said. "If I do not go abroad that is what I mean to do."

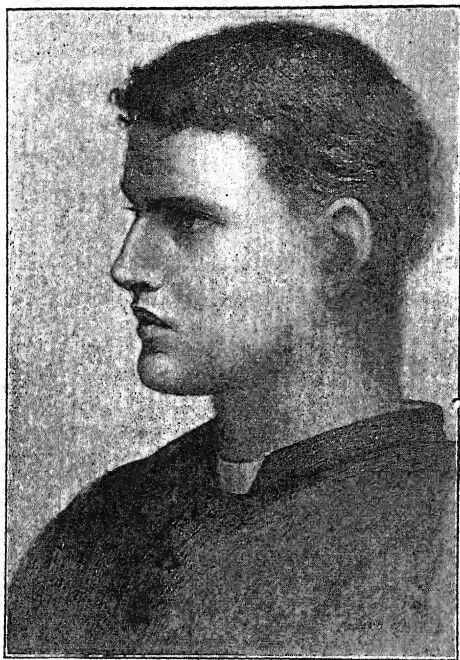
When he was ordered by Government to go to his great work in the East he was asked how soon he

could go, and when his outfit would be ready. "Oh, to-morrow," he replied, "I have nothing to get ready. These shoes are quite good." And so he went, and won the victory.

One day he said he would come and dine with me quietly if I would ask Mr. Farquhar to come and talk to him about religious matters. I begged Mrs. Russell Gurney also to come, and she said, "Will you instead let me ask a young clergyman, Mr. D., in whom I am interested? He is peculiar, and he has a suicidal mania, but I have always felt that if General Gordon could meet him, he would be the man to help him. I have often wished that it might be possible for them to travel together." "But it is impossible at present," I replied, "for General Gordon dines with me on Tuesday, and sails for the East on Thursday, No, do come yourself, without Mr. D." "Very well, I will," said she. "Perhaps you are right."

They met, and as they ate their soup she said, "General Gordon, I have asked a young friend of mine, Mr. D., to come in after dinner, for I have always felt that you could help him more than anyone else, and I have sometimes had a wild hope that you might travel together. He has a suicidal mania, and is now a sort of wreck." I confess I was a little provoked at this speech, but to my astonishment and humiliation General Gordon replied in his simple, gentle voice, "I shall be very pleased for him to go with me." And he *went*, and was entirely delivered from the evil that had beset him, and became, I believe, a useful and happy man till he died.

It was this kind of inspiration which never seemed to desert Gordon. He longed to die (for he suffered from terrible chronic pain) but with absolute bravery and a "single eye" he worked for GOD and man till the end. He esteemed nothing too insignificant to do



in GOD'S service. Some of us perhaps feel rather contemptuous about giving tracts, but Gordon used to take them out and give them away, and stick them in all sorts of little crannies, from which passers-by could extract them.

Every one admires him as an inspired hero. But the things about him that have impressed me most permanently were his *humility* and his *simplicity*. These are two qualities hard to win; but when they are won their value is above rubies.

Another man to whom I owe a great deal is Father Damien. Most of you have heard me talk about him, and many of you have read my book, so I will only say that the life of romantic devotion which he lived meant no airs of martyrdom or heroism, but just a daily life crowded with details of hard work. Like some of our Officers, he was always ready *with his hands* to do a bit of honest labour. He built his Church, taught gardening, taught choir inging, imported cattle, and shrank from nothing that would benefit the thousand lepers. Who could help being to some extent altered by such an example? And who could complain of little hardships after witnessing such a life? He stands for me as a type of heroic, cheerful, Christ-like self-sacrifice. (His noble successor, Brother Joseph, works there on the same line.

In the last letter he ever wrote he said to me "Please do not forget that narrow road. We both have to walk carefully, so as to meet together at the home of our common and eternal Father."

Another man who will always be a factor in my life is D. L. Moody, the evangelist. He had the same kind of simplicity as the men that I have mentioned. All of them rang true and strong, like a great drum, and not like a little squeaky tin whistle, as some

people do! All were set free from self, after a Divine fashion. Moody may be said to have only<sup>e</sup> cared for soul-winning. It was his continual passion, and everything in life ministered to it. He had a great personality, almost alarming from its force. You felt as if thunder and lightning might come from him at any moment. He never talked about himself, but just modestly did his work as well as he possibly could, and we all know what an effect he had on his generation. Moreover, he was a most loving father and husband. He did great things, but he never talked about them if he could possibly avoid doing so.

Another man who blesses me to this day is Sir Arthur Blackwood. He, too, was a great evangelist, but as he had to earn his living he had also to work hard at his Post Office work. Our memory of him is of a warm-hearted, affectionate man, with an outgoing heart at everyone's service. He had the Bible at his fingers' ends, but there was never the least touch of cant about him.

A very different person was George Eliot, the great writer. I had one long interview with her about some discussions I was arranging at my studio. The subject was a comparison, from different testimonies of living people, as to which of the following agencies had most power for turning evil to good:—Philanthropy, Conversion, Spiritualism, Roman Catholicism, Temperance. The idea was felt to be practical, and it caught hold of a class of people who do not generally go to religious meetings. George Eliot's views were absolutely



different to mine, which made it the more noticeable that she should have heard me with much interest and friendship, and with a kind and quiet dignity that I shall never forget. She was in deep mourning. As I sat opposite to her, and watched her worn face illuminated by sympathy, I felt that I could never forget the gentle, earnest, persuasive tones of her voice, and the way in which her whole soul and nature reached out for the cause of good against evil. "Appeal to men rather on the ground of helping this world than of the hope of reward or punishment in the next world," she said. She gave me the best she had to give, and I still thank her for it.

I can never forget Lord and Lady Mount Temple, who for twenty years were (as they still are) a continual power in my life. They were truly an embodiment of the 13th of Corinthians, that wonderful chapter about love. Long practice had made them ingenious in discovering the good side of everything and everybody. Their charity "never failed," and everyone felt a kind of radiant light about them which one could only hope to see once or twice in one's life. Many lessons they taught me of divine kindness in dealing with repulsive or difficult or uninteresting people. Never did they snub or neglect anyone. And they have left a shining track behind them, for men (whom they still help) to follow in.

I will next mention among the friends that have helped me two ladies, both old, each of whom shines very brightly. Thank GOD, they are still living.

Hannah Whitall Smith is one of them. Joyful faith in GOD is her main characteristic, and in this I think she exceeds anyone I ever knew. Read her books if you do not know them. I specially recommend "The Secret of a Happy Life" and "The Unselfishness of God" (in our library). Her faith in Him as Almighty GOD and as Perfection, is so clear and strong that it seems impossible for her to take a gloomy view about anything. She is a Hercules in her faith, and it has served her well, for she has had as great troubles as anyone I ever knew. And added to them, she has now for some years been unable to move out of her chair through rheumatism. Yet her spirit is one of steadfast joy. "Thy will be done" is her happy and safe prayer. She is an American, and a born and bred Quaker, come of a good and holy stock. Most of you know my portrait of her as the central figure in the picture, at Headquarters, of the Conference at Broadlands. I knew her first in 1874, when she was there, and at the Oxford Conference. No one can ever forget the beauty of her speaking and of her demeanour. In private life she struck us at that time as rather wanting softness. One noticed her American accent, her almost blunt directness, and a sort of indifference to *men*! She was markedly a woman's woman, but when she was speaking she became heavenly and angelic to look at, with I believe the inspiration of GOD'S Spirit manifest upon her. Her voice became soft and persuasive, her face got a look of Corregio's Madonna (in his fresco at Parma). A slight flush illumined her colourless

face, her fair hair and her Quaker dress looked ideal. The naturalness and the simplicity of her faith were catching. "Believe what GOD hath said, and come into a place of unchanging blessing." That was her message. Though very talented, she was as simple as a child, an almost adoring mother to her children, and kindly indulgent and consoling to all who sought salvation. "I often wonder that we are as good as we are," she said to one who groaned over his faults. "I am astonished at the goodness of people, and not at their badness. I believe that often the worst and most dreadful developments of evil have physical causes—something wrong with the brain, some dent or some swelling, that makes the poor man or woman think and do horrible things. What we all need is to know and desire goodness, and then to seek it. Forgiveness is easily won by all who have learned the evil of sin, and who desire to escape from it. *Of course* GOD, Who is love itself, is more than ready to save His offspring. Be satisfied with Him. He will never disappoint us in our highest desires, or in our most optimistic hopes. As for me, I simply long to die, and thereby to learn more of Him. I have *no fears*. His will be done."

This is no cheap or untested creed. It is her working principle, which has never failed her. It has made her joyful in tribulations such as have fallen to the lot of very few human beings. I am glad for our sake and our example that she has lived to be old. The trials of old age are perhaps the greatest trials

that many of us suffer from. Failing physical powers, a measure of isolation that comes in the course of years, as one friend after another is removed, humiliations from without and from within—these are all serious things. "I have had every trouble of pain and bereavement and poverty," said one, "but none of them compare with what I now endure, the trouble of getting old." It is not too much to say that Hannah Smith is triumphant in these and in her other troubles. They may hurt her, but they do not hinder or stagger her. "They are chariots taking me to God," she says.

Another friend for whose influence on my life I specially thank GOD is the author of "Hymns and Meditations," by A.L.W. She still remains among us, holy, serene, quiet and yet powerful. She nears the river which lies between her and the visible presence of her Saviour. Her hymn,

"Father, I know that all my life  
Is portioned out for me,  
And the changes that will surely come  
I do not fear to see,"

has, I should think, blessed more souls than any hymn written in the last century. Who does not treasure the desire for—

"A heart at leisure from itself  
To soothe and sympathize"?

A.L.W. has always been rather a silent person, saying nothing till she has something to say, but then saying it with a power and simplicity that *arrests*. I have known her for forty-five years, and have never been

conscious of a fault, so unbroken has seemed her communion with GOD. Though she is silent, she never strikes anybody as cold or unsympathetic. On the contrary a cordial and affectionate light glows in her eyes, and makes itself felt in her voice and in her smile. She is a never-changing example to me of the quiet, fruitful power that comes from walking, like Enoch, closely with GOD. There never seems any waste about her, but when you want her you find her prepared with a beautiful fresh message to meet your need. She is never hurried, she is never distracted.

Not unlike her is another friend of mine, the Hon. Mary S., and I like to mention her because she is (as Father Damien was) a Roman Catholic, and I love to recognize GOD given graces in those with whom we disagree in controversy, though not in spirit.

The same qualities of simplicity, unselfishness, single-eyed devotion, purity and humility are bright in these women. God bless them!

A man who has greatly influenced by his character the lives of others is the present Bishop (Ingram) of London. Even those who, like myself, have not come into intimate contact with him more than two or three times, have received life-long lessons from him.

What impresses me most is that again and again I have heard of his giving much time and much attention to people in trouble or sickness, who would be counted by the world of no account at all, but towards whom his Christ-like heart goes out in the warm kindness which means self-sacrifice. A sick

unimportant lad, a neglected woman, a poor, unknown, suffering clergyman—these are the sort of people who claim his time and thought before he attends to the great and the powerful, who might be supposed to have a prior claim on him. This is very beautiful, and very, very rare. It is behaviour which distinguishes a saint from an ordinary Christian. His friendship, his experience, his purity, and his high and happy spirits are priceless in these "third-rate" lives, and his courage, his frankness and his personal charms are gifts from GOD with which he nobly "trades."

When I think of him and remember how he, with his busy life, deals *unhurriedly* with cases that I should have scampered through I feel ashamed of myself. He impresses every one more than most good people do as an extraordinary *pure* man. "Passion that is controlled becomes a tremendous power for good," he said to me. "Do not let it leak out, keep it as unwasted force to glow through speech and manner." I wish I could remember his exact words, but that is the sense of them. And it was impossible not to know that he was speaking from experience. He is a real saint.

But time would fail me to record how many good and holy people have helped me in my life. I long to write of Edward Trotter, of Miss Carlile, of Andrew Jukes, and of a dozen others. Take note of such in your own lives. Reckon them up, and thank GOD for them. They are among His very best gifts.

E.C.

September, 1906.

DEAR COMRADES,

There is no subject, probably, that touches us all more acutely than backsliding.

For who is there who has not felt guilty of it? Are we not all of us poor stumbling mortals, often falling and failing ingloriously? And only saved by persistent Love and patience.

Dr. Goulburn tells us that the spiritual life in us is like the waves of the sea—forward and backward continually, and that if we desire to know our state we must judge by *longish periods*. Is the tide coming in or going out? Was our Love to GOD warmer a year ago? And our keenness to serve Him greater? And our communion with Him more vital? Was our self-denial more careful? Was our victory over our besetting sin more constant than it is now?

Have we got in any degree careless or lax, or have we neglected prayer and self-examination? Has Satan enticed us by any form of worldly ambition, or self-indulgence, and has that reacted on any of our officers? Achan's Babylonish garment and wedge of gold brought defeat on all the host of GOD.

We cannot generally trace the course of retrogression in others. Perhaps they and GOD alone

know what has caused it. Indeed, they very likely *do not themselves know*. It is easy to be blind to our faults.

It is not difficult for a preacher or teacher to think he is being listened to almost as an oracle when half his audience despise him. His faults though invisible to himself, are plain to them. Just as a man is often quite unconscious that he has gradually become bald, though all the people who sit behind him in church are quite familiar with the unwelcome fact. I have known men and women so vain and tiresome that they will talk about themselves and their doings till they are almost black in the face, and yet believe that their listeners enjoy the conversation.

I have found that the giving way to disloyal thoughts and words about those in authority is sometimes the beginning of backsliding. It progresses till the soul is eaten up with pride and violence as Satan was. The Spirit of GOD is driven away, and then comes some glaring horrible disaster, which makes the very devils stare.

It seems almost impossible to persuade ourselves that a good man—or one who *was* good such a short time ago—should fall so. But everybody sees it. The good are forced to admit it and to groan over it. The bad are pointing the finger of scorn with a dreadful exultation. The sinner brazens it out, and perhaps he even goes on preaching and teaching for a time. But all begin to see the leprous stain, and finally the truth becomes clear



beyond a doubt. And this is by GOD'S goodness, for sin hidden and denied is the worst canker that destroys the soul. It is better for it to come out.

Alas, how unwilling is confession and repentance! How many are like Samson, who after his disgrace "wist not that the Spirit was departed from him."

What denials—what lies come first, and then what exculpations, what recriminations, and excuses follow! Wife or mother or friends look silently on with misery written in their faces.

May GOD bless to us the Scripture subject we are going to study to-day.

It is with strange and doubtful sensations that I sit down to write to you about the great king Solomon, and his fall. It almost seems like a dog criticising a lion, or a sparrow a nightingale, or a sprat a whale. For surely we are as pigmies compared to this great king who was the wisest man in the world, and "beloved" of his GOD, the favourite son of David, and the teacher of all generations. Yet for all this he was a sad and a cynical man, and he fell into the depths of idolatry, and worshipped those foul and horrible deities, Ashtaroth, Chemosh, and Moloch.

He was the builder of the glorious Temple of GOD, he established a wide-spreading commerce with other nations, he founded the Jewish navy.

He had great power and enormous wealth. He was a poet, a preacher, a statesman, and a judge. And through all generations he has been the pride of his nation. Yet he went down.

If this man could thus fall, how shall we stand !

Seven books of the Bible are occupied with him. The books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. And besides these we have two deeply intensely interesting books about him in the Apocrypha—the Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus. At the end of the book of Nehemiah also, there is an important and striking passage concerning him, and CHRIST Himself spoke repeatedly of his glory. Stories and legends of him are rife in the Talmud, the Koran, and in Josephus. We can scarcely bring ourselves to believe that such a man fell into such sins, through the seductions of the world, the flesh and the devil. But so it was.

I think that in all history there is no sadder record of backsliding than that of Solomon. Such a lineage, such great gifts, such a holy beginning, and then such a miserable deterioration.

We have neither the means nor the wish to finally judge him. His repentance is not recorded; and in the great picture at Pisa, by Orcagna, of the last judgment, Solomon is represented as rising doubtfully in the middle of the picture. The painter could not decide whether he was to count him among the sheep or the goats—whether he would go to heaven or go to hell.

We, however, know more than Orcagna appeared to know, for we read in the 7th chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel this promise of GOD to David, "I will

be his father and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity I will chasten him . . . But My mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul." GOD, therefore, granted him repentance and restoration, and at the end of the book of Nehemiah we read, "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by these things (bad relations with women)? yet among many nations there was no king like him who was beloved of his GOD."

He fell, and he rose from his fall by GOD'S grace.

I wish we had been told how and when he repented. The matter is left much as the matter of final restitution is left.

His sins, though forgiven, bore their bitter fruit.

How true to life it is that Solomon's admonitions to his son Rehoboam—preserved to us in the book of Proverbs—should have been so contemptuously disregarded by the young Prince. Good advice does not count for much without a good example! And probably Rehoboam, like other foolish sons of wise fathers, had keen eyes enough for the faults and weaknesses of the King. Many a boast of what he would do when he was king came from him, I dare say, as he chattered to the sycophants whose bad advice afterwards wrecked his kingdom. He became king, he indulged in the luxury of tyranny, and immediately there followed deserved disaster—he lost ten parts of his kingdom out of twelve.

All that we know about Solomon's youth is beautiful. His infant brother (born of sin) had died before

Solomon was born, passionately lamented by his father. But David and Bathsheba were forgiven, and Solomon was given them with a prophecy of coming glory. He was the darling of his parents, and their elder son Adonijah was set aside in order that Solomon might sit on the throne of Israel. He was almost a child when he began to reign, but what a wise and religious child! Bathsheba after her sin appears to have become a good woman with deservedly great influence at court, and evidently she educated the young Prince wisely.

The beautiful story of Solomon's dream comes early, in the fresh morning of his life.

It appears from the book of Proverbs that David had systematically pressed on him the vital importance of learning wisdom and judgment. So when GOD offered the lad his choice of a Divine gift, he unhesitatingly choose wisdom. It was a wise choice, approved by GOD. Would it have been still mere right to choose goodness? Who shall say?

The value of the gift was proved almost immediately, for the young King had to decide between two poor women which was the mother of a certain child. Solomon judged wisely and rightly, and all Israel knew that "the wisdom of GOD was in him."

Shall we not all pray that—according to our measure—this Divine wisdom may be given to us? Do we not need it for ourselves and others?

How deplorable it is when the wrong men and women are chosen to fill posts of importance! When

a fool, or an egotist, or a selfish person, or a weakling, or a mere Jack-in-office is put in authority, everything goes wrong, and the cause begins to totter. Have we not seen it again and again?

I want us specially to notice the two Psalms said to be written by Solomon. The 72nd is of intense interest. Mr. Marson (who wrote "The Psalms at Work") observes that "this noble ideal of kingship has moulded the lives of many sovereigns, among them our own Kings, Alfred and Edmund." Carlyle, the philosopher, says, "How did Edmund of Thetford rise into such favour? Except it were by doing justly and loving mercy we do not know. He walked humbly and valiantly with GOD, struggling to make the earth as heavenly as he could, instead of walking proudly and luxuriously with mammon, and leaving the world to grow as hellish as it liked. His reward lay in the benedictions, and in the overflowing love and admiration of mankind."

If you read this Psalm carefully you will connect it at once with Solomon's prayer for wisdom and judgment. Kings were apt to be tyrannical, unjust, and venal; but we find in this Psalm how strong was Solomon's love of righteousness, and determination to defend the poor. The whole nation was evidently overjoyed by the conviction that the young King would do rightly, justly, and unselfishly. And his reward—that abundance and peace flourished, and that his dominion stretched from sea to sea—was well deserved. The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles, of

Arabia and Sabah brought gifts, and nations did him service, because he delivered the poor and needy, and loved truth and righteousness. The land was prosperous, and his name endures for ever.

The other Psalm attributed to Solomon is the 127th, beginning "Except the LORD build the house, their labour is but lost that build it." It refers to the building of the Temple. Our own King, Richard Cœur de Lion loved it, and chose it for his Crusade. Its opening words are used as the motto of several noble families. Castle Ashby, the house of the Compton family, near Northampton, has the balustrade on the top of the house formed of its first letters.

Besides these two Psalms (said to be actually written by Solomon), the beautiful 45th Psalm probably refers to his marriage. It is one of the Psalms chosen by our Church for use on Christmas Day. I have not space to-day to write of its brilliant loveliness. But I think it is perhaps better to leave it for yourselves to study and enjoy.

Solomon's glory increased. The building of the Temple began. It cost years of thought and labour, but it was at last accomplished in the most splendid way, and at immense expense. How fine is Solomon's prayer at the Consecration. How single eyed the young king was?—the doer of it all, and the central figure in the great pageant. I wish you would read Dean Stanley's account of it all in the second volume of "The Jewish Church." It is magnificent. I borrow several things from it.

And now we learn how, under his auspices, foreign commerce began for the first time in Jewish history. We are told of his Navy, and of his far-reaching power and influence. He seems to have had friendly and profitable relations not only with Syria and Egypt, but with Spain, with Africa, with Arabia, and even with India. From these places he received consignments of ivory, apes, peacocks, spices, gems and gold.

Solomon was now at the height of his glory. Doubtless he was the most interesting man living in the world. His passion for knowledge had led him into fields of science hitherto unexplored. He was a botanist, a student of natural history, and a philosopher.

The love of birds (which is still such a masculine taste) was strong in him. He knew and studied with all his heart those winged creatures. The hoopoe, the lapwing and the cock were his special favourites. And no one who has watched (as I have) the charming hoopoe can wonder at its being loved.

From the cedar of Lebanon to the "caper-plant that grows out of the wall," he discoursed on plants.

There was a fashion prevalent then for all sorts of curious riddles and enigmas. In these Solomon was an expert. We are told expressly that he was "wiser than all men, than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and that his fame was in all the nations round about." (I. Kings iv. 31.) •

His palaces—for himself, and for the Queen—his stables and his great tanks of water were magnificent (I have seen the last-mentioned). For the first time horses (from Egypt) were a common sight in Jerusalem. Hitherto only asses had been used. When he travelled he was surrounded by a retinue of gorgeously dressed guards. His fame spread in all directions.

From distant lands the Queen of Sheba journeyed to visit him, to hear his wisdom and to see his glory. A train of attendants accompanied her. She brought, loaded on camels, costly gifts, such as a great lady would bring—gold, precious stones, and almug trees. A thousand years afterwards CHRIST himself recalled the romantic story. It is said that her name was Balkis, and that she married Solomon and bore him a child, and that though she returned to her own country, they spent three months together every year.

But already seeds of disintegration were pregnant in the kingdom. To meet the expenses the people were severely taxed, and by and bye their murmurs became loud and deep; and there were worse things behind. The King had carried to excess the evils of polygamy, and this was his downfall. He had a thousand wives and concubines, gathered largely from the idolatrous nations around. The principal Queen was an Egyptian, and wives and concubines from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Phœnicia, and the nations of Canaan formed part of his harem. It was they who turned away his heart from GOD.

Women were his downfall, and yet women were the



danger against which he warned his son, and the world in general. Where are there such striking denunciations of the evil of bad women as those that we read in the book of Proverbs? He spoke as one who knew the danger well! He warns, he pleads, and then he falls himself.

How far Solomon's religious convictions went it is difficult to say. Is it clear that he believed in an after state? Certainly there are times and periods when he did *not*. But at other times he was apparently convinced of it. A beautiful passage is contained in the Apocryphal book called the Book of Wisdom (chapters 2 and 3), and whether it was actually penned by Solomon or not, it is fair to suppose that it expresses his thoughts.

It looks as if he believed in GOD as the one supreme GOD Who was to be served and worshipped. But he also seems to have believed in a number of minor deities, who were usually evil and who needed to be propitiated. This belief is not so untenable as might be supposed. St. Paul himself appears to have held that the heathen deities were demons who, in a way, inhabited idols (you remember in what terms Milton speaks in his matchless hymn to the Nativity of the heathen gods).

In speaking to GOD at the Consecration of the Temple (II. Chron. iv. 14), Solomon says, "O LORD the GOD of Israel, there is *no GOD like Thee* in the heaven or in the earth;" and it is easy to recall parallel passages: "Among the gods there is none

like unto Thee." If this supposition is correct, it would not be difficult to believe that he might be coaxed and persuaded by his wives to recognise the gods they had been accustomed to worship, and even to worship them himself. Astarte or Ashtaroh was the Syrian Venus; Chemosh was the war god of Moab; Milcon and Molech the god of Annon. All were abominably bad, and I dare say Solomon regarded them with scorn and hatred, even while he worshipped them—just as now it is possible to hate the very evils which seduce us. Perhaps idolatry is not so far away even now as some people suppose. There is, I believe, a terrible sect in Paris which professes to worship the Devil; and in the Roman Catholic Church it cannot be denied that the worship of numbers of "Saints" is practised. Images can be obtained as easily as Hindoos can obtain images of Kali and Gunesh.

Solomon fell, and his great name is hopelessly tarnished by his fall.

How can I focus for you and for myself the lessons and the warnings of his life?

Watch and pray. Confess and repent. Be straight with GOD and man. Arise and shine

An hour's real prayer and communion every morning, with Bible reading, is a tremendous safeguard. Who would dare to speak with GOD while indulging in some unknown sin like impurity, or idleness, or angry feelings, or dishonesty?

Let there be a careful daily cleansing, while GOD'S

Holy Spirit is invoked for light, and for a holy determination to do right.

If the foot has slipped, recover yourself immediately by GOD'S grace.

Be true. Do not for a moment pose as good if there is sin unconfessed and not put away. Do the right and true thing, and then "Believe in the forgiveness of sins." Rise at once from your fall—humbled, but blessed for fresh service.

This is my advice to you and to myself.

"Arise and Shine."

To write of Solomon's three books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles would take more space than is available in this letter.

The Song of Solomon is supposed by some commentators to be merely a love story relating how a peasant girl was faithful to her shepherd lover, and resisted for his sake the temptation to belong to the royal household; and how, finally, he and she settled with the King's approval in their country home. But others (more truly, I think) believe it *also* to be a kind of parable of the Divine love between CHRIST and the Church, set forth in the guise of poetry.

Of the other two books it is easier to speak.

The book of Proverbs is full of wisdom—Divine and earthly. But it has not the spiritual tone of the Psalms. And this is truer still of Ecclesiastes. It is a melancholy, cynical book in spite of some very noble passages (especially that which concludes it). No one who reads it with ordinary care can suppose

that we are to accept all its lessons and conclusions. Many of them are written as a sad record of the results of a carnal self-indulgent life. The book is a lighthouse, telling us what rocks to avoid, and to what a sad state the wisest of men may be brought by his sins.

Solomon's name means peace, and his kingdom was the type of GOD'S Kingdom of peace and Love.

#### LOVE—WHAT IS IT?

This is not such an easy question to answer as might be supposed.

But GOD Himself is Love, and as we are commanded to love, we may well enquire concerning it. To begin with, it is a comfort to know that GOD never commands us to do what we cannot do, or at any rate cannot *learn* to do. I think it will help us to think the matter carefully over.

We may leave undiscussed certain kinds of love, because they belong to us by nature. Love between parents and children is, thank GOD, natural to humanity, and does not generally need to be acquired. And what can be more beautiful? A mother's love for her son (whether he is good or bad) is a fervent, pure, joyful and self-denying passion, which we all feel is Divinely given. (How well it is described in J. M. Barrie's story of his mother—"Margaret Ogilvy." I advise you to read it.) Experience proves that the appeal to a son's love for his mother is one of the most effectual religious appeals that can be made. How popular

and successful lately has been the song "Tell mother I'll be there." To me, personally, it has become rather tiresome, but I hear that hundreds of hearts have been touched by it; and I believe there are many men who have never unselfishly loved anyone except their mothers. If we loved everybody as earnestly and purely as mothers and sons often love each other, then we should be fulfilling GOD'S command, and there would be little else to try for. But we do not generally love one another after this fashion.

There is another kind of love which we need not discuss. I mean that which we experience when we "fall in love," as it is called. It is natural and delightful for men and women to fall in love, and to marry, and perhaps to bear children. Many of the noblest deeds have been inspired by this kind of love, and it is the favourite theme of poets and storytellers. But, like parental love, it usually comes without our seeking, and there is no particular credit in attaining to it. It *may* even be a mischievous thing, for sometimes it belongs only to the carnal part of our nature, and may therefore be selfish, self-indulgent and fleeting. Sometimes it leads to evil and vice. Yet it ought to be one of GOD'S most precious gifts to us. We are made of body, soul, and spirit, and all three parts of our nature should be holy. This kind of love, then, may be consecrated to GOD, or it may, if unrestrained and misplaced, turn to evil. Let us be clear about this.

But there remains another kind of love, which is the kind I want to speak of, a love which we are bidden to practise as the greatest of earthly virtues, and a virtue which is by no means always easy. It does not come naturally to most of us, and many people only half learn it here. But it will be the *very atmosphere of Heaven*, and we know a few people who live in it even now. It is specially described in the 13th chapter of Corinthians, and in the Epistles of St. John. It was perfectly exhibited by JESUS CHRIST.

It is possible to make kindness and benevolence do duty for it, and they often make a very fair substitute, but they are not the thing itself. I believe, however, that if these virtues are carefully and self-denyingly practised, love itself will come and transfigure them with its own heavenly nature. So it is worth while to be always exercising kindness, even if it is hard work. It has been well said that "drudgery is blessed," and the drudgery of kindness will be crowned sooner or later with the crown of love that it has earned. Patient kindness and pity are such good things that they blossom eventually into joy and beauty, to the surprise of the men and women who practise them. If we add to godliness brotherly kindness, then brotherly kindness will turn sooner or later into love itself (II. Peter i. 7). And then godliness and kindness will no more be a task but a delight.

For myself, I confess with sorrow that I do not

quite love most of the people that I try to help. Perhaps you may have the same regret. Perhaps we both know what is right, and stir ourselves up to be benevolent and thoughtful, and self-denying. We give time and money and work to the needy, and not altogether in vain; but we know, and they know, the difference between that and real love.

Notice how CHRIST behaved. *He loved.* It was not only from patience and goodwill and self-denial that He bore with His disciples, that He talked with Martha and Mary and Lazarus, or appealed to the rich young man whom He beheld and loved. With Him it was the real thing.

But do not let us be too much discouraged if we succeed at first in only being kind and helpful. It is the road to something better, and there was a time when we had not even got as far. Let us keep working upward and onward, steadily and obediently. Love will come. Already we probably know its taste. Our heart goes out to some dear child, or is touched with a warmer thing than kindness as we minister to some suffering man or woman. That is love. Let us take it as a foretaste, and be thankful. And when we go back to our ordinary fields of work let us be "content with such things as we have," even while we hope for something better and more heavenly bye and bye.

Some of us, perhaps, are getting elderly, and are tempted to look with a kind of envy at the happy young people who are in the first rapture of Love's

young dream. Let us rejoice with them, and help them if we can, but do not let us envy them. It is a good time for them, but there are better times coming for all of us if we are patient and obedient.

I fear you may think this rather too grave and solemn a letter, but you must forgive its faults and learn what you can from it. Fill your minds with right and Divine convictions, and your character and work will grow accordingly.

Meanwhile I think if I had to choose between friends and lovers I would choose friends. For if the love of the lover is only earthly it will be like a flower that blossoms and fades. There is plenty of it about, but it *may* die without fruit. How often has it turned sour and become brutal, or cold, or ungenerous towards the object which a few months before it almost worshipped. The *merely* earthly love passes, but thank GOD it *often brings with* it a better love which *does* last. Husbands and wives should be friends and lovers too.

Who can value enough the friend who has proved to be always kind and faithful and generous? To be dependable is better than being delightful, though both are good, and we must not be finally satisfied without both.

Think these matters over, and you will be surprised to find how your mind clarifies.

Then there is the love between GOD and man.

We most of us feel that our love to GOD is but like a bud that is *going to blossom*. Yet He is the



choice of our soul, and even now our life is ordered for Him. We know that He is the sum of all that is worthy of love and admiration. Our soul says, like Solomon, "To be acquainted with Thee is perfect righteousness." (Wisdom of Solomon, xv. 3). In spite of our sinfulness, we would die at His command. We rejoice that in Him we live and move and have our being. We recognise His heart and mind and taste in all that we best love and admire. As Father, as Son, as Holy Spirit we adore Him. We love Him, but we are going to love Him a million times better. Meanwhile let us be *faithful* to Him, sorrowing over every fault, but quickly and humbly and hopefully rising up from it. The Kingdom of peace, joy, and Love (which Solomon's kingdom typified) is coming, and it will satisfy and fill all things. May we all help to bring it about.

E.C.

*November, 1906.*

DEAR COMRADES,

To-day our subject is to be

### PRAYER.

And I suppose there is no subject more important to us. All are agreed that the life and vitality of the Church of God is bound up in it. Prayer is omnipotent when it is rightly used.

Like other Divine things it is simple and easy in some aspects, but very difficult in others. We must endeavour to look at it both ways.

And let us try and avoid dull platitudes. How many sermons there are which tell us only what nobody doubts, and what has been already said thousands of times. How many books are produced which are used only for *giving* and not for *having*. At our old clothes department we get sacks full of them.

Perhaps the first definition of prayer would be "asking God for what we want, and getting it," and some people seem to get no farther than this, and to be upset if their experience seems to come short of it. But there are prayers and prayers.

Hannah prayed earnestly for a son and she got one.

Elijah prayed for a drought, and it did not rain for years. He prayed again, and the rain poured down in torrents.

It is said, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick."

And many such healings have taken place. If a soul is to be won for God, is not the primary thing to pray powerfully and continually for it till the work is done?

"Ask and ye shall receive," said Christ. "Seek and ye shall find" How often has the promise proved true.

It all seems very simple. But when we have got thus far we have to pause and consider, for we know that many requests and a great deal of faith have not apparently met the expected response. Many sick people have died, and a large number of children have grown up wicked, or worthless, in spite of their parents' petitions. Disease and poverty have continued on their course. Millions of heathen, at home and abroad, have died without being converted. Let us consider if there is a mistake, or a misunderstanding, somewhere as to what God's promise means, and what conditions are attached to it.

It may be replied, "Oh, but in these cases there could not have been the right faith, and that is why there was failure." But in our hearts we feel that this was not the reason, for often there *was* faith. And perhaps the thought comes into the mind, "After all have we a right to suppose that we can change God's purposes by our ignorant prayers? Ought we even to wish to do so? Does not He know what is best, and does He not attain it? Ought we to desire to alter His decrees? Ought we, for instance, to wish to remove mountains, or to delay the sun's setting to suit our convenience? Do we not

often prove that if our prayers had been answered disaster would have followed? Were even Christ's prayers always answered?

If He had Divine power, why did He not end evil and pain instead of merely alleviating them? Would it not have been better if His Almighty power had brought about universal goodness and happiness? Cannot God, Who is Almighty Love, do everything that is needed? But does He?

Comrades, I will say at the beginning that none of these difficulties trouble or stagger me, nor need they trouble or stagger any of us. But they are honest difficulties, and they claim honest answers. Let us face them.

Many of them will be met by a thoughtful consideration of the relations between an earthly father and his child, in asking and giving. For they closely resemble those between God and man. A child asks eagerly for all sorts of things, and sometimes the father gives, and sometimes he withholds. Why is this? Because, though he loves to give, he knows that sometimes giving is mischievous. Little children have sometimes wanted the moon, and cried angrily for it. Is the father blamed for not giving it? No, he is aware that the child makes a mistake in wanting it. The little one sees it as a pretty bright thing that he could hold in his hand or roll about. But the father knows that the moon is a planet consisting of extinct craters. Its pretty light is not its own, but is reflected from the sun. It is no plaything for a baby.

Often a child has asked for a glittering knife which would seriously wound it. When it is older it probably asks for fruit and cakes, and sometimes the parent gives them, and sometimes he does not, but in either case he acts for the good of the child.

I heard of a child who was being brought up by parents who were foolishly and wrongly ambitious in social matters (as many of us—rich and poor—are apt to be in certain stages of life), and kneeling at her mother's knee the little one earnestly prayed "And O God make us all very stylish." I hope the mother blushed and reformed, learning her own fault by seeing that such a desire and such a prayer were really unfit and could not be rightly granted. God does not desire that His people should be stylish—He loves them too well.

But does God's varying action do away with the principles and character of prayer? No! Often the child gets the thing *because* he asks for it, and would not get it unless he did ask for it. His prayer brings about a result which would not otherwise be reached. And so it is with us. And when the child becomes a boy does he not often want to be let off his lessons—to have nothing but holidays, not to go to school? Is he not puzzled because his father is not always indulgent?

But is a child to be envied who escapes all the troubles of education, because he is poor or orphaned?

If a baby has any such perceptions would it not seem strange that its little arm should be punctured, and

hurt, and made to swell? What can it know of the dreadful disease that it is delivered from by vaccination? It is all a sign of the love and wisdom of the father.

But it may be objected here, with much apparent reasonableness, "If our prayers can only be granted when they are in harmony with the will of God, what is the use of praying them? For, in any case, God's will is sure to be accomplished." The answer to this is that in many cases the accomplishing of God's will is delayed by the lack of prayer.

There is surely an exact parallel in our relations to our Heavenly Father, in these matters. Many good things are only granted by an earthly father when the children have learned to wish for them and to ask for them.

Again, as to gifts. It is not unnatural that a child should like to have its father's watch to play with. But should such a desire be gratified? Certainly not.

Then where does the value of prayer come in? For its value cannot be gainsaid. We remember how St. Paul prayed without ceasing, and how Christ spent even whole nights in prayer. Luther, during the critical time of the Diet of Worms, spent three hours a day in prayer. Adolph Monod, when he was dying, declared that if he had his life to live over again he would double the time he had spent in prayer, even if it meant half the amount of work.

Have not the men who have attained the greatest results been the greatest men in prayer? Tennyson

was right when he said that more things were wrought by prayer, in heaven and earth, than men dream of.

What we need is to find out if the thing prayed for and desired *is God's will*, and then to vehemently pray for it with compelling faith. For very likely the blessing is only waiting to come till the bell pull of prayer is seized and rung. Our desire and our prayer bring it to pass. It tarries because we do not pray. We do not do our part. Take a simple, homely illustration. A cook is to make some curds and whey. The milk is waiting in a bowl, all is ready. But he knows that milk will not solidify without rennet. He mixes the rennet with the milk, and in a short time the result is attained. The rennet is like our prayers.

How urgent Christ was on the subject. "This kind comes forth only by prayer and fasting," He said when the disciples' efforts had failed to cast out a demon.

Till faith and prayer were strenuously brought to bear on it the devil remained in possession of the boy.

But all the time that we pray there must be underlying the qualification "Thy will be done" both as to the result and as to the *time* of victory. This question of *time* covers difficulties which seem insurmountable. All right prayers will be answered sooner or later, but we must have patience as well as faith. What cannot be done in this dispensation will be done later on in its due course. And some day we shall know the reason of the delay.

There is a view of prayer prevalent among some thoughtful people (held notably by that great man

Frederick W. Robertson, of Brighton) which we shall do well to consider, and to accept as one of its important aspects, but by no means its only characteristic. It is the opinion that the object of prayer is to get us into harmony with the mind of God, but not to alter His decrees. And it is quite true that many times it is by prayer, and while praying that we discover what God's will is. Robertson instances the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane as an example. Our Lord prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him, and the answer to the prayer was His perception that His acceptance of the cup was His Father's will. An angel strengthened Him, and He rose from His agony to meet His doom with all His desires merged in one desire—"Thy will be done."

All this is true, and many of us will testify that it has been our experience too; that prayer has opened our eyes to see that our wish was mistaken, and that God's will was best. Prayer often works that way, but nevertheless its primary idea is the simple one that the desire of the heart may be fulfilled, and the request of the petitioner granted, not always immediately, but in God's time and in God's way. We shall leave off praying if we do not recognise that prayer is a vital element in that compelling force which brings about the consummation of a desire for our own good and for the good of others.

We must consider another important point.

I think we should many of us (I speak for myself)



be shocked if we discovered how very selfish many of our prayers are. It is, indeed, well that some of them are not answered!

A small boy was building in his father's wood a little house of sticks. His nurse bade him come away to dinner, but he first knelt down and prayed thus: "O God, don't let the gardener come this way while I am gone, for he might pull down my house. And if he does come kill him, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

The naughtiness of the desire was only exceeded by the dreadful irrelevancy of the conclusion. But it is only an example of how thoughtlessly and selfishly we are apt to pray. "O GOD bless me, and bless my wife Susan, and bless my two children, for Christ's sake," prayed a man, and concluded his petition without desiring blessing for anyone else. We cannot call such prayers exactly wrong, but their selfishness is surely dreadful. Compare them with the Divine unselfishness of our model prayer, "after the manner" of which we are bidden ourselves to pray. If I could only keep one scrap of the Bible and all the rest had to be done away with I would choose to keep the Lord's Prayer.

From our heated selfishness it lifts us even in its first syllable into a universal atmosphere. We cannot pray any of its seven petitions selfishly, for every one of them includes blessing to others. Even when we speak of the sins we are stained with we have to pray that others also may be forgiven their iniquities.

And yet it is wonderful how tenderly our heavenly

Father regards our human weaknesses and desires. I cannot remember that anyone is reproved for praying selfishly. Even the desire of the elect to be avenged (which I should have thought wrong and unamiable) is not exactly reproved (in the two instances recorded of it). And all the prayers and wishes for health and food and the necessities of life are recognised, cared for, and often granted.

The life of prayer may well be defined as friendship with GOD. It *includes* our receiving counsel and gifts, but primarily it means love and sympathy on both sides and continual happy and trusting intercourse with Him. And "Him" means GOD in all His three manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

It means loving, and being loved, and it is hard to say which of these two characteristics is the most essential. In human friendship I have often said that loving is much more important than being loved, though beginners generally think the opposite, and there are many people who pay little attention to the joy of loving, and are only occupied with anxiety as to whether they are loved. Consequently they are the prey of jealousies and piques and little miseries which they would entirely escape if they had the sense to attend to their loving, instead of worrying about whether they were loved back. I pay much less attention now to my friends' feelings towards me than I do to the important question of whether I am properly liking and loving them. One way means

happy freedom, the other means fretting and bondage.

What a miserable sort of friendship it is when one party is always begging for gifts and thinks of nothing but receiving presents. What an objectionable sort of child it is who behaves thus with its parents. Yet that is the main idea of many people in their intercourse with God. It is "ask, ask, ask," and "get, get, get," all the time. Such people ought to be ashamed of themselves. Presents are not bad things, but they are almost the least important thing in friendship. Sometimes one would much rather not have them. They are almost as bad as testimonials which no nice person *wishes* to get, however gratefully they may be received, and even enjoyed in some cases. The truth is that selfishness is apt to half spoil our intercourse both with GOD and man. But the joy of love and sympathy, and of doing on both sides the will of the other is the greatest delight that can be found.

Some men neglect friendship so much that they scarcely know what it means, and though their lives may be brilliant and successful they are scarcely ever beautiful lives, and generally they end in being dull and bereft of interest, for if they "do not love their brother whom they have seen how can they love GOD whom they have not seen?"

The test of a prayer I think is, can it be included in the principles of the Lord's Prayer? We shall find that nearly every prayer can be. Forgiveness, cleansing, deliverance from the world, the flesh and the devil,

goodness, and the supplying of our bodily needs are all there, and these blessings are for others as much as for ourselves.

If I want to pray for a man's conversion, or for his deliverance from drink, is not my request all contained in "Thy will be done," or "Deliver us from evil?" With such a basis we have only to bring the man's name and circumstances before GOD and to urge our request with all the compelling force we can. The prayer will be answered—perhaps soon, perhaps not soon; but answered in the best way and beyond our highest hopes.

Finally then, let us *ask of GOD and commune with Him*. His holy Spirit will inspire our prayers, and will often teach us the next step in bringing about their answer. Let us pray our best at the *beginning of our day* before our mind has become full of the day's distractions and work.

"Many times we have not because we ask not." An immense and superhuman power is ours if we will use it.

Very often one result of praying is that our eyes are opened to discover something that we ourselves have to do or to say in order to bring about the desired result. The praying person is not idle.

The following story of my friend Amanda Smith, the negress (whom you all remember in the big picture in the Training Home Study) has a good moral. A Mrs. Willing came to her at a Conference in America and said, "I want you to come to my tent, and to pray

earnestly for three things—first for my husband, that he may have special help in preaching this afternoon. Secondly for myself—I am speaking continually (three times on Sundays), but it is a great cross to me to speak before any of my friends who may know me. It makes me nervous and often mortified. Then, thirdly, I want you to pray for a gentleman with whom I have been talking on the way to the meeting. He is bitterly opposed to holiness meetings, and has spoken evil of them.”

Mrs. Smith agreed to go with Mrs. Willing and they knelt down silently. Then Amanda Smith turned to her and said quietly but positively, “There is no use in praying about your husband, that is all settled.” Then, after another pause she said, “As to the matter about yourself you had better use your own common sense about that matter instead of praying about it.” Then she prayed with all her might and main for the minister who was opposed to holiness. The tears poured down, she seemed truly to wrestle, and kept saying, “I dare ask it, I dare ask it.” And then she said, “If he will not yield, break his power, break his power”—bringing down her fist with each petition as if she were smiting an anvil.

Mrs. Willing writes, “What happened was that my husband preached splendidly that afternoon, with much power; that I myself ceased to worry and be nervous, and used my common sense about the matter. Thirdly, that the minister who opposed the work was so dealt with, that in three months he was outside all

his work, and even outside the ministry and in secular life."

Now I think this is a valuable story. It is well worth pondering over, and putting its moral in practice. There are many things that people would never pray for if they knew what their prayers involved. But I think that God more than forgives our ignorances, and counts that love and affection are greater than the world's wisdom.

May He save us from callousness. It would be easy for the world to justify the heathen custom of killing weak and deformed children, and old and feeble people who can no longer work or support themselves. But how beautiful is the Christian mother's love for a hopelessly afflicted child, and the child's prayer for the life to be prolonged of parents who are past usefulness in the opinion of the cold world.

And love is often wiser than wisdom. How finely Dickens has dealt with this matter in his exquisite story of Tiny Tim, in "The Christmas Carol." Love and pity for the needy and suffering are the most beautiful and divine things that this poor world can produce.

The dreadful thing is when we find that we have become in any way *indifferent* to trouble. It is sad and ugly when people do not duly grieve at the death of those who have been near and dear to them, even if usefulness had been outlived. I was ashamed of myself the other day because I had forgotten that a kind friendly man whom I once knew

was dead. I had sorrowed over the news many years ago, but he had lived a long way off, and I was never likely to see him again, and after a time it passed from my memory that he had died. And I all but betrayed my forgetfulness.

I felt just like a man I heard of who met an acquaintance and said, "How are you Jones? How is your father?" "Have you not heard," said Jones, "that my father is dead?"

"No, indeed," said the other, "I do sympathise with you in such a loss. *How dreadful.*"

But a week after he met the same friend again, and asked the same question—"How are you Jones? and how is your father?"

And Jones replied, "Still dead."

Some virtues are easier to us as we get older. For instance, real simplicity and humility are often the growth of age. I remember once being vexed at something which I had told to Lady Mount Temple about myself having been repeated in a way I disliked. Knowing that she was exceptionally discreet I asked her if she had mentioned the matter, and immediately she replied, "I am afraid I did. I am so sorry, but the tongue! the tongue! What trouble it causes us, and what faults we commit through it. Forgive me."

Her simple and sorrowful admission of a slip of the tongue made a lasting impression on me. Not one person in a thousand would have thus acknowledged it without extenuation. Of course I felt that I had done worse myself, countless times.

Another virtue of maturity and age is kindness. Faber has said that not many young people are *kind* and pitiful. This is chiefly because experience has not taught them to weigh truly the difficulties and trials of others. "Serve them right" is too often the verdict of the ignorant, but it was never the verdict of Christ. I heard of a poor notorious fallen woman who had engraved on her gravestone only the two words "Thou knowest." Children and immature people are often strangely callous about the sufferings of others. A little boy the other day went to see a pig killed. His mother reproved him and said, "How could you do such a thing, would you like to go and see me killed?" And he answered, "I would if you squealed as much as the pig." Men and women, and the poor old world itself, all grow kinder and more pitiful as years pass on. Let us abound in hope for ourselves as well as others. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

And let us give thanks continually to God that He has called us to the business of winning souls, and of helping and comforting those who are in need.

Farewell, dear comrades. I have loved to write these letters to you. May they bless you as much as the writing of them has blessed me.

E.C.

THE END.



